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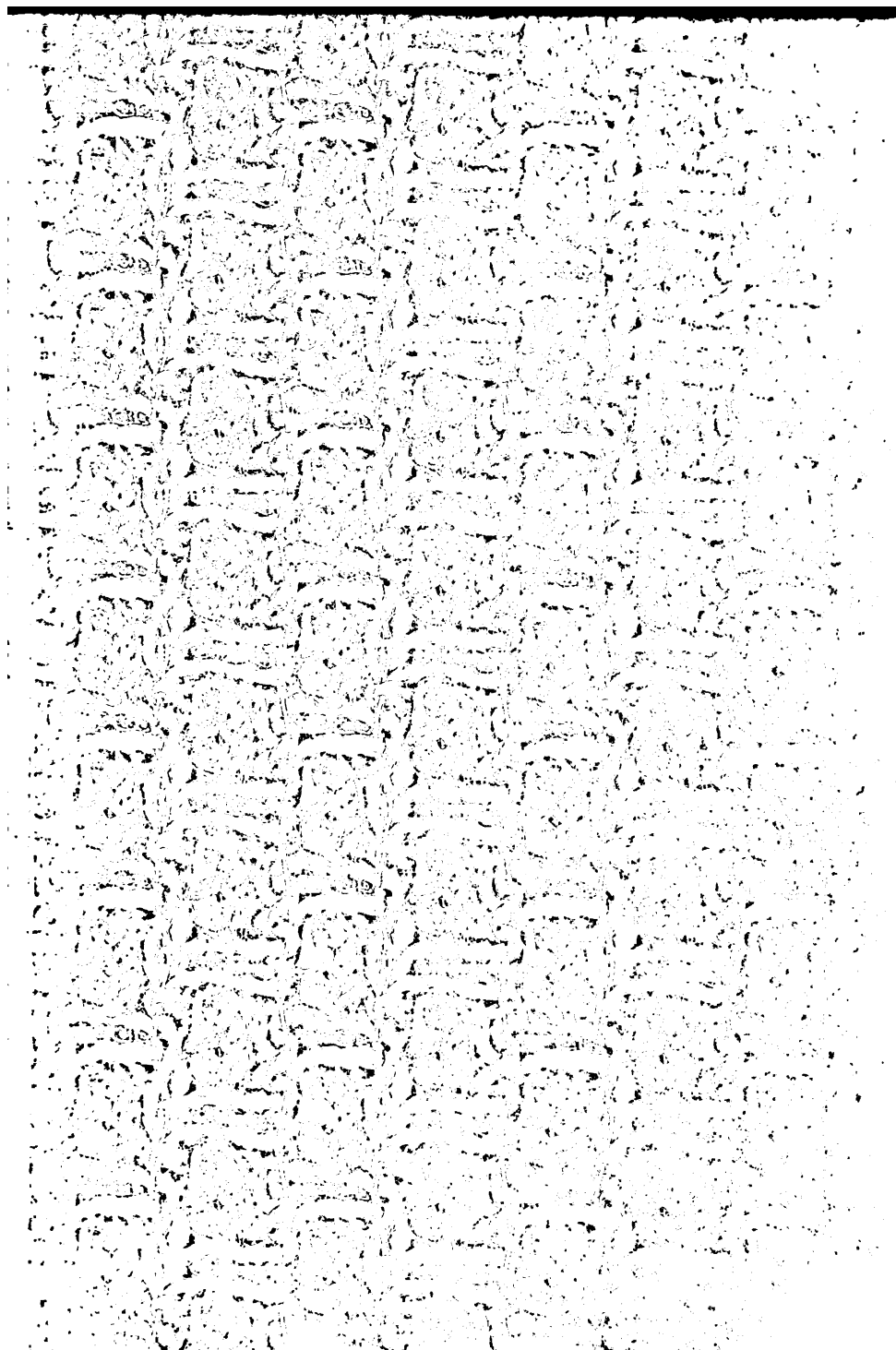
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A.
CHARLES A. BERRY, D.D.

BY JAMES S. DRUMMOND

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CHARLES A. BERRY.

D.D.

A HISTORY

BY

JAMES S. DRUMMOND

His Fellow Student and Co-Pastor

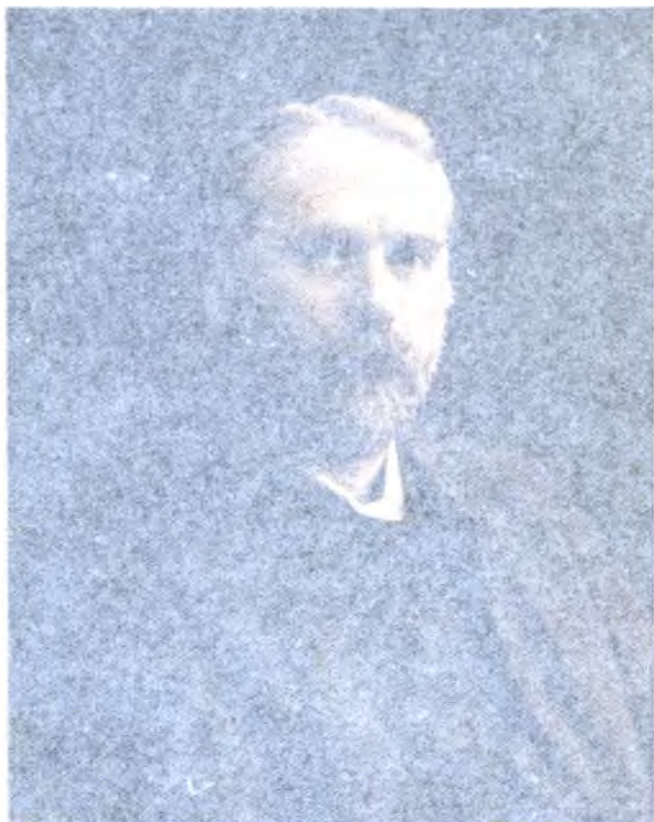
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Charles A. Barry
—

CHARLES A. BERRY,

D.D.

A Memoir

BY

JAMES S DRUMMOND

His Fellow-Student and Co-Pastor

WITH A PORTRAIT

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P R E F A C E .

THIS memoir has been written at the request of Mrs. Berry and in response to the suggestions of many who loved her husband and desired some record of his life. Mrs. Berry has given me much assistance, not only by placing at my full disposal all available material, but also in counsel and revision.

Special acknowledgments are due to Mr. F. Holderness Gale, of London, a close personal friend of Dr. Berry, and to Mr. Henry A. May, a deacon of his church in Wolverhampton, who have given me unsparing and invaluable help in the preparation of the memoir.

In addition to these, and to the gentlemen whose names are attached to their several contributions, I desire to tender hearty thanks for assistance given in various ways by other intimate friends of Dr. Berry: to Mr. F. A. Atkins, editor of the *Young Man*, for permission to republish portions of Dr. Berry's article, "My First Sermon,"

which first appeared in that magazine and was afterwards published by Messrs. James Clarke & Co. in a volume bearing that title ; to Mr. Howard Evans, Mr. Albert Dawson, Dr. H. S. Lunn, the Rev. Thomas Law, and Mr. James Rutherford.

Dr. Berry wrote neither diary nor autobiography. His letters were not the elaborated and leisured productions of a secluded dilettante, but were those of a hardly-pressed and overwrought man ; were written *currente calamo*, and, save for a passing phrase, reveal little of the charm of his versatile and vivacious personality. The only available materials for weaving his life-story have been such fragments of autobiography as were elicited in interviews or volunteered in articles or speeches ; newspaper cuttings, which are far from being continuous or complete ; and the recollections of his friends.

In dealing with his opinions and with the incidents of his life, I have, wherever possible, used his own words. It has not appeared to me that it fell within my province to pronounce judgment upon any distinctive and controversial statements, but simply to set them forth as clearly and adequately as materials and space would permit.

It will be evident, from the recent date of Dr.

Berry's decease, that this biography must have been written with some degree of haste. It has also been prepared amid the distractions and labours incidental to a busy pastorate, although my church has extended to me every consideration. The marks of haste will, I fear, be but too evident to the critical reader, as they are to myself. No attempt has been made to write an exhaustive and elaborate biography. Every friend of Dr. Berry, it would appear, had his own ideal of the form his biography should take, and the aspects of his life and work which called for special emphasis and for fullest treatment. No two, it may be said, were alike. I have sought within the limitations imposed upon me, and with the materials at my disposal, to give a truthful and vivid picture of a many-sided man of great talent and power, a man who won a unique affection, but whose personality was so elusive and rare and winsome that any portraiture is bound to seem inadequate. I cannot claim for the biography that it is strictly impartial. Who among those who knew Charles Berry intimately could have approached such a task in a coldly critical spirit? We all made an unconditional surrender to the spell of his magnetic brotherliness. This book, written by

one who knew him most intimately from boyhood to his ripest manhood, may not be impartial, but it is honest. It is "the truth told lovingly." Once, when speaking of Ward Beecher, Dr. Berry remarked that "written or spoken eulogy is apt to become exaggerated, or, in fear of exaggeration, to fail in tribute." Those who knew the subject of this book best will give me credit for having lapsed into the latter error rather than the former.

JAMES S. DRUMMOND

*Milton Church, Huddersfield,
November, 1899.*

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INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE been asked to write a few words introductory to this biography of my lamented friend, Dr. Berry. Comparatively brief as his career was, it was inevitable that a biography should be asked of one of such brilliant gifts and such winning qualities. Everything, indeed, conspired to deepen the interest awakened in him. The wide popularity which he had won, and the high promise which he gave of still greater usefulness and distinction; the sympathy and anxiety awakened by a long and trying illness, and last, but not least, the tragic circumstances of his death—all awakened a desire to know something more of one who had endeared himself to the hearts of numbers, and who had made so deep an impression upon a very much wider public outside the ranks of his own immediate circle. He was a man who had many friends and multitudinous admirers, and all are more or less interested in his personal history and even in his inner life. Of course, the materials for the biography of a man who was only beginning to take his true position are comparatively

scanty. But whatever they are, there is no man who can better estimate their value and use them to good purpose than his friend and my friend, the author of this volume. It was always a pleasure to see them together. Two brothers, members of the same household, trained under the same influences, having behind them the same associations, could not have been more intimate in their fellowship or, I believe, stronger in their attachment. To see them together was a spectacle of Christian unity and brotherhood not easily to be forgotten. No man knew Charles Berry better, and I commend this book in the full confidence that no one could lay a tribute of more hearty affection on the tomb of one so intimate and beloved.

J. GUINNESS ROGERS.

CHARLES A. BERRY, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

TOWARDS the close of 1887 a sensation was caused in Great Britain and America by the news that the premier pulpit of the United States, that of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, had been offered to a young preacher, unknown to the general public, who had been quietly working in the obscurity of an English provincial town. The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher had died in the March of that year. In the following October the Rev. Charles Albert Berry, of Wolverhampton, preached in Plymouth Church on two successive Sundays, won at once the unanimous suffrages of the people, and received an enthusiastic call to become Beecher's successor.

"Who is this Mr. Berry?" was being asked on all hands. Had a really great man been among us, and had we left it to the people of another country to discover him for us? Many confidently predicted that he would clutch eagerly at the splendid prize. To their surprise the call was quietly but decisively declined.

It was refused on grounds that astonished many. The young man, all but unknown, was confident that he had a national work to do on behalf of Christianity. He judged that, as pastor of a church in a Midland manufacturing town, he could, on the conditions that church offered him, win an influence and do a work which should surpass the opportunities that the most illustrious American pulpit could afford him. He set himself the great task of vindicating this assurance and of fulfilling his own prophecies about himself. How well he succeeded is now acknowledged by his countless friends in both East and West, who watched his career with interest and admiration. Those who had known him best and longest were confident, before his sudden eminence, that he would achieve success. None could have foreseen that a fame greater than could have been won by years of such steady and brilliant work as he was then doing, would be gained in a month or two.

Charles Berry was called to the Brooklyn pastorate in November, 1887, when he was not yet thirty-five years of age. On the last day of January, 1899, little more than eleven years later, he passed away. Of these eleven years he was laid aside by illness for fully two. Thus, in practically nine years he began and consummated one of the most brilliant public careers of the century. Few men have done so much in so short a space as did the preacher who died in the very prime of his manhood and at the

meridian of his power and fame. It is of these nine strenuous years that this book will mainly treat. The early years were full of interest and promise. In them he was laying, surely and steadily, the foundations of his later ministries. But this period we may regard as only preparatory and disciplinary, and of less moment to general readers than the closing years. The story of the early life and work must, however, be briefly told.

Charles Albert Berry was born in Bradshawgate, Leigh, on December 14th, 1852. His father, Mr. Peter Berry, had removed to this Lancashire town from Wrexham, where his early life had been spent. Berry used to say that he had Scotch blood in his veins, and that his father was the son of a Scottish forester, who had sixteen children, eight boys and eight girls. When he was very young, Berry's parents removed from Leigh to the neighbouring town of Bolton, and then, when he was five years of age, they went to reside in Southport. His father opened a shop, as cabinet-maker and furniture dealer, in Chapel Street, one of the principal streets of the town. Both husband and wife were thrifty and industrious and the business prospered. They were much respected by their neighbours, but were in no way distinguished for any remarkable intellectual attainments. They had eight children of whom four died in childhood. Charles is described, by some who saw him in early boyhood,

as being a bright, merry boy, very fond of reciting, and delighting in innocent fun and mischief. His parents were members of Chapel Street Congregational Church, of which the Rev. J. E. Millson was then pastor. He entered the Sunday School there, and is described by his teacher, Mr. W. H. Whitehead, as having been a rather turbulent youth. He seemed to have had aspirations towards preaching even in childhood. His teacher recollects that one day in class he said sagely, *à propos* of we know not what, that he saw quite well how it was that so many ministers failed to get hold of the people. They prepared very fine sermons in the study, and when they got into the pulpit they could not deliver them. "If ever I go into the ministry," said the oracle in knickerbockers, "I shall study elocution." In an article on "My First Sermon," in the *Young Man*, Berry tells us how he began to preach at the mature age of seven.

"My *very* first sermon was preached more than thirty-five years ago, before I had made the epoch-making transition from frocks to trousers. A clean pinafore made an admirable surplice, and an orderly row of chairs and stools—some of them occupied by my sister's dolls—constituted a congregation worthy of a City church, and not too exciting for a young preacher's nerves. My mother and sister, together with a few friends, were present. I forget all about the sermon, except that it was upon the sleeping

Christ in the storm-tossed ship, and that it was followed by a collection for the *John Williams*. But two things made that scene and evening ever memorable. First, though I had merely taken a fancy, like many other children, to 'play at being a minister,' I became really serious and earnest—at least, for a child of my age and temperament—before I had got far with my game. And the second circumstance was an outbreak of emotion on the part of my mother, who clasped me to her breast and told me she had prayed before I was born that God would give her a son to be a minister, and that she felt her prayer was answered. I cannot say that, except for the moment, I was greatly impressed by the announcement. I am quite certain that up to my sixteenth birthday I never seriously recalled the circumstance. Indeed, my boyhood was much too vigorous and intense to suggest remembrances or prophecies of so exalted a vocation. My heart was on the sea, my brain was busy with all sorts of daring schemes."

Berry's first schoolmaster was Mr. Chadwick, of whom he often spoke with warm regard. Afterwards he attended the Wesleyan day school. The head-master of that school, Mr. James Wilkinson, happily still survives. He seems to have been a dominie of the "Domsie" type, taking a warm interest in any one of his pupils who showed himself "a lad o' pairts." He shall tell his recollections of his distinguished pupil in his own quaint, old-time way.

"Albert, as I always called him to the end of his career—and he said he liked to hear me address him in that manner—was brought to my school by his father in July, 1864. At that time I had a number of highly intelligent boys and girls, my school being mixed, of a class superior to those usually found in public day schools of that period, and my custom was to classify my pupils according to their attainments and general aptitude, and not according to age; and, though I had scholars older than Albert, finding him so bright and apt to learn, I put him into the first class, and from a record I now have of a summary of school-work during the half-year ending Christmas, 1864, each subject bearing a number value varying with the manner in which the lessons were prepared, I find that Charles Albert stood at the top of the list.

"On Friday, January 20th, 1865, we had our scholars' tea and entertainment, in the latter of which Albert took a prominent part. I well remember what a substantial contribution to our amusement he made by reciting a piece entitled 'German Wool,' and also what a marked ability he showed as an impersonator, and the drollery and good humour he displayed as 'Bob Rustic' in 'A Queer Case,' a rustic comedy illustrating a village law-suit, the characters represented being the Magistrate, Lawyer Switchem, Richard Rustic, his brother Bob Rustic, James Butcher, John Clothman,

and Barney McGee, each youth having characteristic attire for the occasion. Our chairman was the late John Fernley, Esq., who gave to the Wesleyan Connexion, Trinity Wesleyan Chapel, and Trinity Hall, Southport, and who was also the founder of the Fernley Lecture. There were also present the Revs. W. B. Pope, D.D., John Bowers, late Governor of Didsbury College, F. W. Greeves, and a large number of ladies and gentlemen. The performance was a great success, and afforded hearty amusement, to which no one contributed so large a share as Albert. He was a general favourite in the school, full of fun, and always ready for a little quiet, innocent mischief, but he never willingly caused anyone pain or loss, and if he unwittingly did so he eagerly sought opportunity to make reparation. Mrs. Wilkinson, my wife, was mistress of the infant department in an adjoining building, and I had frequent communication with her on school matters, almost invariably employing Albert as my medium, and as soon as he entered the infant school there was a general outlook for something comic. He was good-looking, remarkably conscientious, true and trustworthy, and anxious to please, so that when he undertook any duty I had no anxiety as to the doing of it. Discovering these traits in his character, I at once singled him out as a desirable candidate for pupil-teachership, and directed his studies accordingly. He continued his school duties with me with this end in view for some time,

but towards the close of the second year of his school life with me he either got out of touch with the fag of elementary teaching, or circumstances connected with his home interfered, and my cherished hopes were cut off. I have some thought that the great Father of all had other work for him to do, and that His hand turned the current of his life into a wider region.

"After being with me about two years he was removed from my care, a circumstance that caused me much regret at the time, and he became a clerk in the Telegraph Office, but did not remain long in this situation. He continued his studies privately, and there always seemed to be some Power impelling him onward and upward. I, of course, ever felt a fatherly interest in him to the last, and whenever he came into or near Southport to speak, either in the pulpit or on the platform, he always, as he told me himself, looked out for me, and seldom in vain, and he said my presence was always an inspiration to him. There was no one, outside my own family, in whom I felt a deeper interest; and if it were not that God takes the good ones to heaven, I should sorrow more than I now do at his early removal from his sphere of remarkable influence and power."

About this time Berry became a member of the choir of a High Church in Southport, and came into contact with its ritual and teaching—soon, in fact, came into conflict with it. He was told by

someone there that Dissenters could not be saved unless they abjured Dissent and were baptised and confirmed in the Established Church. He said his father and mother were Dissenters, and he asked would they be lost; on being assured that they undoubtedly would, he promptly and decisively said that he would take his chance with them, and, picking up his cap, he bowed himself out of the Church of England.

When Berry was about fifteen, his elder brother Peter opened a draper's shop in Aughton Street, Ormskirk, a quaint old market town about eight miles from Southport, and Charles joined him there. He often walked between the two towns before eight in the morning. His more frequent mode of transit, however, was on a Lancashire and Yorkshire engine, a breach of the regulations which he effected through the friendly offices of the drivers, with whom the smart, handy lad was a prime favourite. He became thoroughly expert in the practical working of a locomotive engine, and of machinery in general. He and a schoolmate constructed a model engine, and telegraph wires between their homes, and both these mechanical efforts were completely successful. His hearers in later life will recall many a striking illustration drawn from the prosaic world of machinery, and he was never caught tripping in his technical allusions. As a lad his highest ambition was to become an engine-driver on the railway,

and to the last, if he had a minute to spare in starting on a journey, he would go to look at the engine, note its points and have a chat with the driver. He always took a warm interest in railway men, and in Wolverhampton was often a welcome guest at their annual gatherings.

The Congregational Church at Ormskirk was fortunate in having as its minister, at that time, a man of distinction and marked ability. The Rev. Dr. J. M. Macauley, of the Dutch Reformed Church of America, had retired from an influential pastorate which he had held in New York for nearly twenty-five years, and had come to England to pursue a course of historical research. He was persuaded to accept the temporary pastorate at Ormskirk. He was an inspiring and magnetic preacher, a man of wide culture, and he had the gift of winning the confidence and affection of young men. He admitted them to very happy and helpful comradeship.

Twenty years later he recalled the Ormskirk days at a reception given to Mr. Berry at Plymouth Church, at the time when that church decided to call the young Englishman to its pastorate. The two men had never met since Berry went to college. Dr. Macauley said : " A number of the younger members of the community joined the church. Mr. Berry was one. He soon afterwards said he wanted to study for the ministry. I was deeply interested in him on account of the depth of his religious feeling,

and I aided him. I usually discourage many of the young men who come to me as he did, but he was too earnest. I knew he would make a good minister, and I am proud that he has proved my judgment correct." "There," said a lady when she heard this at the reception, "didn't I say Mr. Berry was American-born as soon as I heard him? Of course, I mean American *born-again*, for that is the only birth worth talking about."

To the insight and masterly prescience of Dr. Macauley, to the sympathy and encouragement he extended to an unformed lad, the Christian Church stands deeply indebted. He soon saw possibilities of usefulness and distinction in the undeveloped, restless stripling, who almost idolised him. Under his influence and that of several young friends Berry says that he was led to make decision for Christ—"a subject of which I could talk and had ever been familiar. I began to think and pray, the result being an intelligent belief in Christ's message. I began quietly and almost unconsciously to live in a purer and higher atmosphere, having had no violent struggles, being conscious of no rapturous emotions, entering not into a present, perfect calm, yet knowing whom I had believed. I had grown to love Christ more and better than anyone or anything else besides, and to know that He loved me." This is the confession of his Redeemer by a boy of sixteen.

He soon showed his whole-heartedness in his new and deeper life. He took up such forms of Christian work as were available in the Sunday school and Band of Hope. A young men's debating society was formed, and we read in its records of Charles Berry opening discussions on such daring topics as "Ought the British Government to Interfere to obtain the Freedom of Spain?" It may be remarked that of the little band of young men whom Dr. Macauley gathered round him, three found their way into the Christian ministry—Charles Berry, his brother Peter, who entered Airedale College a few months later than his younger brother, and the Rev. Thomas Gardiner, now a Baptist minister in Beverley. Mr. Gardiner, who was his Sunday-school teacher, says that Berry's chief characteristic then was a love of fun. His favourite humourists were Artemus Ward and Mark Twain, and a quotation from one of these he regarded as "a fine set-off" to his conversation. He was a keen critic of human nature, gifted with a quaint and vivid descriptive style. Those who knew him intimately found him daring and original both in thought and expression, taking little for granted and feeling that his life bristled with interrogation points. He took few into his confidence as to his aspirations for the ministry. Having sought counsel from his pastor and parents, he sent an application to the Principal of Airedale College. Beneath the lightsomeness of boyish pranks he had

been "nourishing a youth sublime," with high dreams and aspirations that at sixteen made him feel himself "a dedicated spirit." He had never tried himself by actual experiments in Christian speech, he had not preached, had not even addressed the children of the Sunday school. He felt within him the instincts of the preacher. There was no time for him to undertake any actual preaching so as to prove himself. His pastor wisely enough concluded that specific training in this could be more effectively given later ; he helped him with his studies in classics and mathematics in prospect of his examination by the college committee, and at last the tremulous aspirant left the seclusion of the sleepy old town to face his destiny, fortified by his mother's prayers, his pastor's confidence, and, as far as the world could see, with little other equipment.

CHAPTER II.

COLLEGE LIFE.

BERRY went to Bradford to meet the committee of Airedale College a few days before Christmas in 1869, when he was seventeen years of age almost to the day. He says of that ordeal:—

“There was a rule at Airedale that every applicant for a studentship should have a more or less ample and indicative record as a lay preacher in connection with his own church. It was also essential that he should prepare a special sermon to read before the committee. I neither possessed the one nor did the other. I was a mere child, not yet arrived at my seventeenth birthday. Beyond taking a class in Sunday school, reading papers at the Young Men's Society, delivering a few speeches on temperance, and entering into the discussions at a pastor's class, I had done nothing to indicate my interests and aptitudes. Not a single sermon had I preached, not one public service had I even partially conducted, when I made my application to Airedale College. Yet I felt myself called of God to this high task of preaching, and called of Him to make myself fit for the privilege. The college committee was greatly exercised about me. ‘Only a boy,’ said one man,

as I was afterwards told; 'it will do him no harm to send him back for a while.' Another, a stickler for rules and a slave of precedents, remarked that no student had ever been admitted without a record of preaching, and a sermon in evidence of power. But the others were struck with the novelty of the application, and of the grounds on which it was based, and in the end I was admitted *sans* sermon, *sans* record, *sans* everything."

The Rev. Simeon Dyson, then of Idle, was secretary of the college, and well recalls Berry's appearance before the committee. "He was fairly well prepared in classics and mathematics, but the thing that struck me and the other members of the committee was the remarkably prompt, clear, and intelligent way in which he expressed himself in answer to the questions that were put to him as to his personal experience and his views on certain theological subjects. This force and facility of expression was distinctly noticed as being a decisive recommendation."

Berry and I first met on that fateful morning when we had to face this ordeal. We happened to be the only two candidates, and were both trembling in our shoes. Berry was quite certain he would not be admitted. I recall him as he appeared before the committee, a well-set-up, bright-eyed lad, whose face beamed with sunny good-humour, and who gave the general impression of alertness. Much to our

surprise and relief we were later in the day called before the committee and told that we were accepted for the customary six months' probation. Some of our fellow-students for many a long day after expressed their astonishment at our admission. The committee must have been in a much more complaisant mood than when *they* had been received, or we should have been summarily sent home, wiser and sadder youths. This hurt us at the time, but the years brought some little consolation. Berry soon gave offence by actually perpetrating a practical joke on some of the senior students, within a few weeks of his admission, and this unheard-of audacity led to some very scathing remarks about the impudence of juniors.

Airedale College was an old rambling building, standing on the top of a hill overlooking the city of Bradford, and only divided by a wall from the Undercliffe Cemetery. It has since vanished before the enterprise of the speculative builder, and the institution itself, having become amalgamated with Rotherham College, has become the Yorkshire United Independent College. Berry said in later years:—"I studied theology in full view of the busy industrial city of Bradford, lying at the foot of the hill on which the college stands, and this gave an intensely practical turn to my thinking, forcing me to regard all problems from the standpoint of actual life. I hold strongly that it is a necessary part of

the training of one who is preparing for the ministry, as soon as he has passed the preliminary stages of his academic course, to come into direct touch with life on its practical side."

The teaching staff at Airedale College consisted of two professors. The Principal was the Rev. Daniel Fraser, M.A., LL.D., who also taught Theology, Homiletics, Hebrew, German, Old and New Testament Exegesis, and Church History. Berry made kindly public reference to his former principal on more than one occasion in his later life. Dr. Fraser retired on the opening of the new college at Heaton, soon after we left, and was succeeded by the Rev. A. M. Fairbairn. The Rev. W. C. Shearer, M.A., was Professor of Classics, Mathematics and Philosophy, and Berry maintained a very close personal friendship with him to the close of his life.

Professor Shearer has contributed the following recollections of his former student:—

"It is difficult, at such a distance of time, to recall truly and vividly, traits of character, incidents, and indications of future eminence that were marked enough at the time. Charles Berry was the youngest man in the college, and had, during the greater part of his course, a brother older than himself among his fellow-students. He was, therefore, always 'young Berry,' and was the privileged man of the house and a universal favourite.

"What first impressed me was the buoyant grace

of his disposition and the ease with which he came up to all the duties expected of him. His work never embarrassed him, and he had evidently a genuine pleasure in his studies, and was always alert and alive to his finger-tips. In the department of philosophy he was first in a class of men who have since done good service in the churches.

"The course of studies was adapted to the requirements of the B.A. degree of the London University, though Charles Berry never took the degree. His ambition took another direction. He was early smitten with the glamour of the power and ennobling influence exerted by the popular preacher. Vague and shadowy at first, it grew upon him, and, half unconsciously to himself, shaped his aspirations, reading, and even his pleasures. He was always extremely well received as a pulpit supply, and towards the end of his college course plainly revealed that he had found what he thought was to be his mission in life—that was, power for good exerted through the spoken word. He would be a reformer of many things by the influence of persuasive speech. His doctrinal views had not yet definitely, and to any great extent, taken form and shape. He had difficulties with the then dominant Calvinism, but he was always full of love to God and man, and saw 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' and very soon after entering upon the responsible work of the ministry, which he did on

leaving college at the age of twenty-two, he came to see clearly and to feel intensely the glory of Christ as the suffering Redeemer of mankind. The atonement made by Christ became the vital element of his teaching. He preached God in Christ and Christ in God."

A Sunday or two after Berry's admission he was appointed to preach in the evening at Valley Road Mission Room, connected with Salem Chapel, Bradford. He did not know of this until the Friday afternoon, and the text had not then been chosen. Many possible texts had been discussed between us before then, but each seemed inadequate when he was brought face to face with the actual experience of writing a sermon. At last, after much uncertainty, he got well under weigh with his first venture. The text was an exacting one for the "'prentice hand" of a lad of seventeen—Revelation vii. 14: "These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." He wrote it out carefully in his clear, characteristic hand on a large ruled slate, and, after many erasures and many an emendation, it was copied out paragraph by paragraph, on paper. The Sunday evening came and found him in a state of high nervous excitement.

I was to accompany him and see him through the ordeal. He had adroitly purloined several lumps of sugar from Mrs. Fraser's tea-table, "because Dr.

Macauley always found that sugar was good for the voice." His talk, by the way, was full of gloomy foreboding. He was sure he would hopelessly break down and would have to creep back to college covered with disgrace. I remember little of the service beyond the fact that, once launched on his work, he soon recovered his self-possession, and spoke forcibly and with marked acceptance to the devout and humble worshippers assembled. His delivery was easy and natural, and every word told.

A few weeks later he was appointed to preach at Grassington, a remote village in Wharfedale, generally supplied by students. Two sermons were now required, and he still had but one. He came to my study on Friday afternoon in dire perplexity. He had to leave for his appointment soon after noon on Saturday: could I give him a text? I told him of one on which I had a sermon half written. He asked to see what I had done, looked it over and said, "That will do first-rate," and, with the utmost nonchalance, walked off with it to his study. He shut himself up till long after midnight, was up early next morning, and in the middle of the forenoon came in buoyant and triumphant with his sermon in his hand. He calmly told me he had burnt mine for fear I might play tricks with it, and then read me *his* sermon. It *was* his. There was not a sentence he had found in mine, but he said this had given him

a start, and that was all he wanted. The subject was "Cross Bearing."

He says of his second essay in preaching,—I quote again from his article in the *Young Man*—that Grassington regarded itself, and was regarded by us, as the students' testing place. "To be judged by Grassington was more essential and more determinative, and therefore more trying, than to be judged by a college committee. I never got into bed on the Saturday night; I paced my room in a fever of nervous excitement, I saw in vision the row of village fathers, whose capacious heads had been vividly sketched for me by a fellow-student, and I trembled in view of the morrow. How great was my joy on the Sunday night when I found that Grassington had been graciously pleased to accord me its certificate of merit,—'Yon's a lad wi' a bit o' grit'—a certificate duly ratified in solemn assembly half-way across a meadow, with dear old Samuel Rogers as chairman and the impressively-philosophic Binks Lee as judicial summer-up. Peace be ever upon those large-brained and kindly-hearted men of the Yorkshire Moor who did so much to encourage the young men of my time, and whose shrewd counsels and practical wisdom did more for me than many a pretentious lecture in college class-room!"

Berry has told in the same article the story of his first experience in the sermon class. "I chose for my text, 'What is man that thou art mindful of him?'

and I set myself to make a lasting mark by the brilliance and wealth of its style. The sentences in that sermon make me shudder when I turn up my manuscript to-day. It *did* make a lasting mark, but happily of a more disciplinary and corrective kind than I desired at the time. Vials of ridicule, contempt, pity, were poured upon the sermon and its author when the time came for the students to criticise.

"The Rev. J. P. Ritchie, one of the most gifted and refined of my contemporaries at college, and who is now doing brave and fruitful work in South Africa, subsequently wrote a squib upon me and my sermonic abortion, couching it in the silly and grandiloquent style I had attempted, and pasting it on the college notice board. Never shall I forget the chagrin and sense of disgrace with which I contemplated the wreck of my big effort. I had meant to storm the admiration and to earn the envy of every man in the house; and I lay in my study with my ambition shattered and my status imperilled. I cried through some sleepless nights over my failure, and even cherished flitting thoughts of resignation. But sounder sense followed the second week of my wounded pride. I took the lesson of my brethren to heart, and have now to thank them for a saving dispensation of castigation."

The sermon did not deserve all the hard things said of it at the time. It was crude, bizarre, high-

flown, extravagant in thought and language, but all this was only the effervescence of vigorous youth which had not yet found itself, and gained the mastery of its own powers. His next few ventures more than redeemed the reputation he had thought hopelessly lost, and he soon made his mark as a youth of exceptional promise. In glancing over the sermons he preached during the first two years he spent in college we see many crudities. It could not be otherwise, for he was not yet out of his 'teens. But we see very marked force and originality. He knows he has something to say, and he says it in the most direct, forcible, and practical way possible. There is no attempt at fine writing. There are no "purple patches." There is little in the way of illustration or literary allusion. The sentences are unwieldy and somewhat laboured. The thought is clear and vigorous and is expressed in an emphatic and striking way. In one of these sermons he used the daring phrase to which Mr. W. T. Stead gave such vogue many years later—"Let each Christian strive to become a Christ." We all felt as we heard Berry preach in class that we were listening to one who would accomplish great things if spared.

His college days were cast in a period of theological transition; he shared the mental ferment and unrest of the day. Epoch-making books found their way into his hands and stirred his soul. F. W. Robertson's sermons, Seeley's "Ecce Homo," Carlyle's

"Sartor Resartus," J. McLeod Campbell "On the Nature of the Atonement," the writings of Maurice, John Young, Bushnell, and John Stuart Mill, George Macdonald's theological novels and "Unspoken Sermons," Emerson's essays and Tennyson's poems were speaking the prophetic message of the new time. The critical and theological problems of to-day were hardly formulated. Bishop Colenso was the arch-heretic of criticism. The doctrine of Eternal Punishment was the leading question of the day. But there were many "spectres of the mind" to be laid. They were faced and fought in each other's studies. We got little help from our theological class-books, which were Hodge's "Outlines" and Pye-Smith's "Scripture Testimony to the Messiah." We had to "beat our music out" in many a strenuous talk with each other. "The narrow and antiquated teaching I received," said Berry, "threw me largely back on my own thought and reading and intercourse with fellow-students. Some of the best influences of my life I trace to two of them (Vaughan and Ritchie): one deeply imbued with Maurice, and the other, who was of the very best type of Scotsman—broad-minded, scholarly, reverent, and devout." *

Berry was a hard-working and enthusiastic student. He had great facility in the study of languages, and was markedly successful in mental and moral philo-

* *The Congregationalist*, Boston, U.S.A., October 27th, 1897.
Article by Mr. Albert Dawson.

sophy. He could not but be conscious of his abilities as a preacher, and this increased his anxiety to become a scholar as well. He wrote to a friend, "I may have preaching power, but I would like a good education to feed and nourish what preaching ability I possess. There are three degrees of comparison, and I would prefer the superlative." "I shall never fear being able to preach." "As to preaching, I think I was born to do that." But this conviction never led to indolence in regard to his studies. Rather he became more and more anxious to secure the ground-work of a broad and thorough education. To be "a scholar and preacher combined" was his confessed ambition. He said in one of his letters, with a frank self-depreciation that does not always characterise a junior student, "I have the power of using what I know, only the bother of it is I do not know very much." He worked hard at his classics, got some knowledge of Hebrew, French, German, and Church history, and acquired a general scholarship that would have easily secured him a good degree at Oxford or Cambridge. He was very anxious at one point in his college course to go to one of the universities, and then return to Airedale or some other theological college to finish his training for the ministry. The way did not open, and he toiled incessantly to make the most of the advantages within his reach.

Unhappily, about the third year of his college

course, his studies were very seriously interrupted by ill-health. On his way to a preaching engagement in a very remote country district, he missed his path and stumbled into a stream. He got a thorough wetting, and on arriving at his destination was put into a damp bed. When he came back to college on the Monday he was very ill, and rheumatic fever supervened. For some time it seemed as though he would never live to enter the ministry. He missed many of his classes for months, and was never the same man again, but was left with a weakness of the heart from which he never fully recovered. Still he struggled bravely on, and seldom lost his cheery brightness. He was always the leader in every harmless frolic, always the centre of a merry circle, and always earnest in everything that made for devoutness and consecration. I have before me a characteristic letter of his written about this time.

"October 29th, 1873.

"We have just had a glorious time in college. One of the Bradford ministers has been up and has given us a very earnest address. We all adjourned to a study and had a thoroughly earnest, spiritual prayer meeting. I felt quite lifted up by it. I cannot express to you the need we feel in college of greater spiritual life. By coming into daily contact with eternal verities we are apt to lose sight of their importance and to think of them merely as they

relate to class work and sermons; thus our true self is dead, and we become little better than machines. Oh, I do want to break down this cold formality and to be real. I hope I may rely upon your constant and earnest prayers. I want to be a spiritual power in the Church, but to be this I must be strong in spiritual life."

During Berry's college course he won marked success and popularity as a preacher.

The Rev. S. Dyson says: "On two occasions he preached for me at Idle, and I was present and heard him. On the first occasion his text was, 'My soul thirsteth for God,' and I remember afterwards saying to two of his fellow-students, my son and Mr. Aitken, who were present, 'This young man, if spared, is destined to distinguish himself.' On the second occasion his text was, 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.' In announcing him to my people I said, 'Mr. Charles Berry will preach here this evening, a young man who will be heard of in the denomination.' What struck me on both occasions was his effective delivery, clearness of thought, and power of expression. I watched his subsequent career with great interest, and rejoiced, but was not surprised, at his success."

Our college course supplied us with a splendid training in preaching. The services of the students were in great demand, and there were few Sundays when we were not at work. We were sent now to

a remote hamlet to be judged by rustic "sermon-tasters," now to a mission room in a "mean street," now to an influential suburban church, now to a stately sanctuary associated with the honoured name of a Parsons, a Conder, a Miall, a Mellor, a Bruce. All this was an excellent schooling in adaptiveness, and made demands on our best powers.

Berry soon made a name for himself among the Yorkshire churches. When his college course had two years to run, overtures were made to him by influential churches, and in his last year several sought to secure him as their pastor. He gave the preference to an invitation to St. George's Road Church in Bolton, which he received in September, 1874. He left college early in the following November, as he was then far from robust, and needed a few weeks' rest before taking up the arduous duties of his first pastorate.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOLTON MINISTRY.

ON the first Sunday of 1875, Berry entered upon his pastorate at Bolton. What was described as a "Ministerial Recognition Service" was held on the last day of the March following. The Rev. John Hunter, then of York, the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, and Professor Shearer, representing the college, were among the notable men who took part in the service. Berry would not have the service called an "ordination." "I never wish to be more than or different from a *man*. I believe that the hope of Protestantism lies in the thorough and utter manhood of gospel preachers, in their entire resignation of anything and everything, however small and apparently unimportant, which even *seems* to divide them from their fellows into a separate class. I desire not the touch of a bishop's fingers. I allow not to any man the right to *ordain* me to the ministry of the Word, and I therefore enter and am this day recognised as a member of that ministry in which I need not sell my manhood for ecclesiasticism, and in which God's ordination is considered sufficient." These words, from the "statement" he made at his Recognition service, fairly indicate Berry's views

in regard to the nature of the Christian ministry in the first year of his pastorate, and show that he was in revolt against many of the usages of the churches. This position became very considerably modified in time. Before he left Bolton, he had begun to hold and to teach many of the views as to the nature and functions of the church and the character of its ordinances which he so strenuously advocated at a later period of his ministry. This was notably evident in a paper on "The Spirituality of the Christian Church," read to the Bolton and District Association of Congregational ministers and deacons.

In the August following his settlement, Berry was married to Miss Mary Agnes Martin, only child of Mrs. Martin, of Claremont, Southport, to whom he had been engaged for about three years. I may be permitted to say that this union was a singularly happy and helpful one. In his wife he found an unwearied, a tactful, and a sympathetic helper in all his growing work, and one to whose watchful devotion to all his interests he owed more than words can tell.

St. George's Road Church, Bolton, is a handsome building, seating between eleven and twelve hundred people, and standing in one of the main thoroughfares of the town. The position in which Berry found himself, as its pastor, was a very exacting one for a youth of twenty-two. His predecessor in the pastorate was the Rev. W. Hope Davison, a

preacher of great force and originality, a gifted writer, and a man of mark in many ways. The pulpit had great traditions, and the pastorate made many demands on the tact, wisdom, and strength of the man who held it. The sturdy Lancashire man does not wear his heart on his sleeve. He is the frankest of critics, and has a contempt for all affectation, effeminacy, and "starch," which he does not hesitate to express in terms that leave nothing to be desired on the score of vigour and directness. Berry soon won the approval of the men he met by his manliness and straightforwardness, though perhaps they did not tell him so. They found him kindly and genial in disposition, with a marvellous memory for faces and names. If he met a man once, in even the most casual way, he would recognise him again and would cross the street and speak to him, undeterred by week-day garb and grimy hands. The man in corduroy and clogs was a man whose good opinion it was worth his while to win, that he might be able somehow to help him.

Berry threw himself heartily into public work, and soon became a recognised power on the public platform, where his vigorous and incisive speech made his appearance always welcome. Writing under the name "Specula," he contributed a series of social and political sketches to the *Bolton Journal*. He had great influence in bringing together into closer fellowship all the churches of the town.

Mainly on his initiative the association now known as the Congregational Council of Bolton and the District was established, and it owed much of its success to his fostering care. In July, 1881, Berry was elected a member of the Bolton School Board, to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of a member of the party to which he belonged. A few months later an election took place, and this was the occasion of a stormy campaign. His trenchant and vigorous speeches made a great impression; but though he was returned, his party was left in a minority on the new Board. For two years he did most valuable work in the furtherance of free, progressive, and unsectarian education. He was a keen and ready debater, and soon acquired a practical mastery of the routine of the Board and the working of the schools.

Amid the claims of a busy pastorate and of his public work, Berry, while in Lancashire, gave a foremost place to his pulpit preparation, and his sermons were the outcome of careful study. He was a fastidious critic of his own work, and the result of a hard day's toil was frequently consigned to the flames and a new start made. Working under great pressure, he was often writing until the last moment, but few signs of haste were apparent in the sermon when preached. In later years he profited by this habit of careful preparation in the early days of his ministry.

When Berry left college his theology was inchoate and nebulous. He was only twenty-two years of age, was keen, alert, receptive, studious. For a man of his age to have claimed maturity and finality for the creed he then held would have proved him a marvel of hapless precocity. He held, and he preached, certain deep convictions. The great theme of his preaching was the Fatherhood of God, which he conceived to be the central and essential attribute of deity. Without expounding any *theory* of the Atonement, he preached the *fact* with deepening passion and urgency. He accepted the historic Christ, His Divinity, His Incarnation in the Birth at Bethlehem, and the Redemption by His Cross. In his opening sermons at Bolton he expressed the conviction that in the full proclamation of Christ crucified we have the only power that can conquer the evil that is in the world. These were primary convictions, which he held then and held to the end. Sometimes a stray utterance in the first years of his ministry seemed hardly consistent with these, but this is hardly to be wondered at in the case of a young man of vigorous and independent mind, passing through a period of intellectual ferment and transition. Berry had for some time been in revolt against much that was contained in the theological class-books of his college. He was needing for his "mental fight" help that they had not given,

Having broken with much of the old, he had not yet gripped the more positive factors of the new. He had come under the spell of the books and living men who were leading the revolt against the traditional, the narrow, and the outworn. Evangelicalism was even then almost synonymous with Calvinism. The broader Evangelicalism was only just beginning to spread in the churches. A number of men in the ranks of Congregationalism were viewed with suspicion by theologians of the old school. Men like Baldwin Brown were winning a steadily growing influence, and the growth was hastened by futile attempts at ostracism, if not persecution. Younger men rallied round them and threw themselves keenly into the fray, and Berry was one of that militant band. He was not perhaps the thorough-going iconoclast that, seen through the retrospect of later years, he seemed to himself to have been. But he held many negations in regard to truths which in later years nerved him with their vital affirmations. He held, in a tentative way, many theories which would not stand the test of pastoral experience. At this period many who greatly admired his courage, frankness, and ability felt him somewhat lacking in spiritual and devotional power. He seemed to be at his best on the platform, dealing with concrete matters of policy ; or, when in the pulpit, he was handling practical and ethical questions, rather than

when touching upon the mysteries of the Christian faith. In his preaching there was something of a chill remoteness and an inability to give free play to his full humanity which happily soon passed away.

He told some of his Bolton friends, at the time, how startled and disappointed he had been at finding himself powerless for a while to give help and comfort to a woman who was dying, amid tragic and squalid surroundings, in one of the lowest parts of the town. He had been called upon to minister to her, but as he unfolded the Christian message, as he was wont to preach it then, the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood and the Eternal Love, as he told the story of the Prodigal and the Magdalene, her heart gave no response, and she looked up with eyes which seemed to him to ask if that was all he had to say to a lost and dying woman. Under a new afflatus, that came he knew not whence, he began with trembling voice to speak on evangelical simplicities, to tell of Christ's death for a world's sin, and to point her to the Cross for pardon. To his joy and wonder he found that in response to words as simple as those he heard at his mother's knee, the sinful one found rest and peace.

This experience sent him home to reconsider his theological position. It helped him to realise the inadequacy of much that he had been holding and teaching. Possibly the change may not have been

wrought so suddenly and directly as he afterwards thought. A man may know how far he has travelled and yet may forget some of the milestones and cross-roads of the journey. A student cannot always state with precision the factors and stages of the evolution of his faith, even though the main history of his development is clear to his mind.

Berry may have, quite unconsciously to himself, magnified the direct influence of this one pastoral incident. But he many times, both in public and in private, referred to it as the one experience which, more than any other, taught him that the only effective and victorious Gospel was the Gospel of the Cross preached with clearness and fervour. Speaking many years later, at the opening of a mission-room in Bolton, he told the story, and then stated that the hall in which he then stood was built all but on the very spot where he knelt by the bed of the dying woman, learnt his great lesson, and received his new evangelical impulse.

It is perhaps impossible now to state the precise effect of this incident upon Berry's own belief and message. Probably it wrought little, if any, doctrinal change, but led rather to one of perspective and emphasis. Berry's was always a receptive mind, and it was greatly affected by the awakening religious thought of the period of his early manhood. The assimilation of the new with the old required time. They were not at once unified in his mind. At

this mental stage you might expect vagueness, crudeness, and inconsistency in his utterances. It may well have been that this incident, which must have happened during the first six months of his ministry, did, as by a flash, show him that he had been giving an undue prominence to presentations of truth which were of less practical import than some to which, in his preaching, he had not been giving the vividness and the emphasis which they demanded; he may have learnt by it that his sermons needed to be less academic and speculative, and more practical in aim, simple in phrase, direct in appeal, and fervent in spirit.

All who knew him marked the great change that, in his ministry at Bolton, came over his belief and message. He outgrew many things which were the almost natural crudities and immaturities of self-assertive and vigorous youth. Before he left Bolton he had ripened rapidly on every side of his nature, had gained insight and depth, and had won power over the hearts of his hearers, as well as mastery over their minds. He did not become less broad and progressive in his main attitude towards theology and Biblical criticism. Up to the time of his leaving Lancashire he was looked upon as one of the more advanced men in the county. As a proof of this and as an example of his independence of judgment, and courage in expressing his convictions when they were the convictions of a minority, we may recall

his action in circumstances when that action exposed him to some suspicion and censure.

In the years 1877-8 Congregationalism passed through a heated controversy, as the outcome of the meeting of what was known as the "Leicester Conference," held in the autumn of the former year. The Committee of the Congregational Union sought from the May assembly of the Union in 1878 what was practically a re-affirmation of the Declaration of Faith and Order adopted in 1833, and pledging the Union to the acceptance of the Facts and Doctrines of the Evangelical Faith, as set forth in a resolution proposed by Dr. Enoch Mellor. At the annual meetings of the Lancashire Congregational Union, held in Preston in April, 1878, Berry read a paper "On some of the Responsibilities of Independent Nonconformity," in which he vigorously assailed the position taken by those "who seem to have more faith in the purifying and protecting influence of a denominational resolution than in the revealing and safeguarding power of the Holy Ghost." The contemplated action seemed to him "the denial of some of our most cherished opinions, the abrogation of the grandest feature in Independency." The daring speech in which Berry, with no sparseness of invective, assailed the policy of the leaders of the denomination made no small stir in the assembly. His protest in this did not necessarily mean that Berry's theological

position was identical with that of the men who belonged to the extreme left wing of Congregationalism, for it was shared by many who, like him, were Evangelicals, but who regretted what they regarded as not only legislation in a panic, but a betrayal of some of our most deeply rooted convictions as to the futility of creeds and tests as safeguards of Christian truth.

During his Bolton ministry he travelled much, and developed the faculty of making himself at home in all sorts of company, and of learning something from every man he met, and from every place he visited. Norway and Switzerland, the English Lakes, Scotland and Killarney were among the places he visited. In 1880 he made his first journey to America. His companion then, as on several holidays, was his friend and fellow-student, the Rev. J. Brunton Aitken, then of Rochdale. They had decided on the trip, when Mr. Pinkney, a friend owning a large fleet of steamers, offered them the use of a state-room on the *Govino*, carrying cargo from Swansea to Montreal, and sailing on July 25th. The voyage occupied nineteen days, and was not lacking in adventure. In a storm the cargo of Welsh coal shifted, and for the rest of the trip it was difficult to walk the deck on account of the heavy list. After narrowly escaping running down a deep-sea fishing boat off the Newfoundland coast, they were ten days in a fog, and were all but wrecked on

the rocks off the Island of St. Pierre, the ship actually grazing them but escaping with only a small hole in her bows.

They visited Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Buffalo, New York, Washington, Philadelphia, New Haven, and Ocean Grove. For three days they were the guests of Mr. P. T. Barnum, and at a dinner given in their honour they had the compliment paid them that they were as magnetic and racy as Americans, and were not at all "typical Britishers." Berry was for many years on terms of close personal friendship with Mr. Barnum, and he had many racy reminiscences of "the great showman" to recount. Shortly after the American call, Berry was dining with Mr. Barnum in London, and was invited to accompany him to Olympia, where the show was then being held. Barnum had proposed to drive him round the ring, when he made his own triumphal circuit, but Berry shrewdly guessed the intentions of his enterprising friend, and insisted on alighting at the entrance. He was shown with much state into what proved to be the royal box, and as Barnum drove round and round the ring, he pulled up his pony chariot opposite the box and made a profound obeisance each time he passed, leaving the immense crowd to speculate as to the august Personage to whom this marked honour was paid. Berry found Barnum a man of deep spirituality. In a letter accompanying a book of daily devotions he had found helpful, Barnum says: "I find, by talking

with many English gentlemen, that it is true here, as it is in America, that more liberal views of 'our Father in heaven' and the ultimate destiny of all whom He has created, permeate all the churches, and the minds of most intelligent thinking men. The clergyman who can conscientiously let in a ray of light to the minds of his hearers, will give unbounded relief to many good persons who have fears and doubts about the eternal welfare of their wives, husbands, and children, even if they themselves squeeze into heaven. To me such views are dishonouring to God, and fearfully tormenting to man."

While in New York, Berry went to Brooklyn to call on Henry Ward Beecher, to whom he had letters of introduction, but found that Beecher was spending his vacation in the White Mountains. He went to Plymouth Church, and standing in the famous building and looking up to its rostrum, he little thought that seven years later he should stand there and be called to succeed him whose honoured name had drawn him thither. The two friends returned to Liverpool by the Cunard s.s. *Scythia*, and reached home on Saturday midnight, having had much anxiety as to whether they would be in time to fulfil their engagements to occupy their pulpits on the following day, the first Sunday in September.

On his return, Berry concluded a lecture on his trip with these words, which seem to reveal the spirit he did so much to foster in later years: "I feel that

between the two great countries, England and America—holding the same faith, speaking the same tongue, washed by the same ocean—there should be a unity of sentiment and of aim; a rivalry only as to which should be foremost in spreading the blessings of peace, and in raising less fortunate peoples to a higher condition of life.”

It is interesting to recall in this connection that the call to Plymouth Church was not Berry's first opportunity of settling in America, nor in that same city of Brooklyn. While he was in Bolton he met the Rev. Edward Eggleston, D.D., author of “The Circuit Rider,” and “The Hoosier Schoolmaster,” and, in company with him and Mr. Joseph Boyle, made a trip to Scotland and the English Lakes. Dr. Eggleston strove hard to induce Berry to consider a proposal that he should become associate pastor with himself in the Church of Christian Endeavour, Brooklyn.

During his pastorate at Bolton, Berry made a name for himself throughout the county as a man of administrative ability, a vigorous platform speaker, an eloquent preacher, and was universally regarded as a young man with a future. He was a member of the Executive of the County Union for many years, and rendered service that is still gratefully remembered by his former colleagues. He always showed great tact and sagacity, with a very useful faculty for handling delicate situations and difficult men. He was approached by several churches which sought to

secure him as pastor, including Cannon Street, Preston, and Elgin Place, Glasgow. Owing to strong representations made to him by his church at Bolton, he decided, however, to continue his work there. At the end of July, 1883, he received a call to the church at Queen Street, Wolverhampton. While he was considering this invitation, he was visited by a deputation from an influential church in the North of England, who laid before him an urgent request that he would postpone his decision until they were able to hold a formal meeting of their church. If he would do so, they were able to assure him that he would receive a unanimous call to the pastorate. To this, however, he courteously but firmly declined to accede, and he wound up his refusal in words of characteristic audacity. "If I come to you I shall be Dr. —'s successor. If I go to Wolverhampton I shall be somebody's predecessor."

The call to the Midlands commended itself to Berry as offering him a field both extensive and varied, among an earnest people who were eager to share in the broad enterprises of progressive church life. And it had come with great cordiality and perfect unanimity. On Sunday, August 12th, he intimated his acceptance of the call.

On Berry's decision to leave Bolton being made known, he was invited to a meeting of representative townsmen with whom he had been associated in ministerial, political, and educational affairs. Most

cordial testimony was borne to the value of his labours as a brilliant speaker and writer, an educational leader, a citizen foremost in philanthropic work, and a friend beloved of all. An illuminated address, together with a purse of 100 guineas, was presented to him by Mr. J. P. Thomasson, M.P., in the name of his fellow-townsmen. The address, from which I quote one or two paragraphs, testified to the sense of loss felt, not only by Berry's personal friends, but by the community generally.

"We have admired your conduct as a citizen, and appreciated your earnest and eloquent advocacy of a robust Liberalism, and shall ever remember with pleasure the cheerful service you have given, on the platform and through the Press, in favour of freedom and progress.

"More especially would we allude to your invaluable services as a member of the Bolton School Board; by your grasp of the principles underlying the question of elementary education, by your tact, readiness in debate, and genial bearing, and by your desire to raise the education question to a higher level; but, above all, by your earnestness and love of the cause, you have won the gratitude of your colleagues, the respect of your opponents, and we doubt not the thanks of all those who desire the public welfare."

Berry was much gratified that, on leaving the town where he had laboured nine years, such a hearty recognition, not only of his specific work as a

minister, but also of his worth as a man and a citizen, was accorded by fellow-labourers who were by no means all connected with his own church.

In addition to these tributes from outside, Berry received many tokens of the affection and gratitude felt for him by his own people—the members of his church and Sunday school. In response to these he uttered words that seem to sum up the main characteristics of his work in Bolton. “I believe in the power and in the vocation of the preacher. Let him be a man with a human soul in him, quick to feel and to respond to the various moods in the masses around him: let him be a Christian man living near to the Lord, with a spirit seeking at the Cross to preach Divine pity and love, and he will become a powerful man in England, a maker of England’s statesmen, a maker of her judges and of her municipal rulers, and through them influencing all society for Christ.”

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY WOLVERHAMPTON MINISTRY.

BERRY commenced his ministry at Wolverhampton in October, 1883. His predecessor had been the Rev. D. Jones Hamer, a man of many gifts and of a devout spirit, who had left England to become the minister of Collins Street Church, Melbourne. He was not then in very robust health, and died suddenly in 1886, while in the prime of manhood. Queen Street Church had been for nearly two years without a pastor, but on the appearance of the young preacher from Bolton the people were at once won by his vigorous preaching and his personal magnetism, and promptly gave him a unanimous call to the pastorate.

Queen Street Chapel is a very handsome structure, built in 1866. It seats nearly 1,300 persons, but Berry has more than once preached to close on 2,000 people within its walls. The building is situated in the heart of the town, and at some distance from all the main residential districts. It was attended by a large and influential congregation, including large employers of labour and civic leaders, whose names are household words in the annals of Midland Congregationalism. When Berry

went thither he found a vigorous and well-organised church, with a membership of 400 at Queen Street itself, and 200 connected with the various branches. The church had always pursued a large-hearted and aggressive policy. At the time of Berry's settlement there were nine branches in the town, suburbs, and neighbouring villages. The staff of workers consisted of the pastor, two assistant pastors, one labouring at Heath Town and the other at Tettenhall Wood, an evangelist who had charge of the mission station at York Street, a Biblewoman labouring in the homes of the poor, and a colporteur who visited and conducted services in the distant hamlets. The out-stations were supplied and controlled by an association consisting of between twenty and thirty village preachers. The pastorate was one that thus called not only for pulpit efficiency, but also for assiduity, tact, practical wisdom, and executive ability from the man who assumed it.

The new sphere of labour proved congenial to a man of Berry's temperament and gifts. He was surrounded by large-hearted and capable men who were ready to respond to every suggestion which promised increased efficiency for any section of the work. He threw himself with his characteristic self-forgetting enthusiasm into his labours. Every part of the large organisation was conscious of a new impulse from the centre. He soon became a power in the town and county. Soon after he

settled a Jubilee Fund of over £5,000 was raised, and was expended in removing existing liabilities on some of the mission stations, and towards the erection of new churches at Heath Town and Stafford Street, and a new Sunday school at Swindon.

Their new pastor soon won the enthusiastic affection and support of the young people at Queen Street. Immediately on his acceptance of the call being made known they invited him to a reception, which was held before his public recognition by the church and congregation. This young people's reception to their pastor afterwards became an annual event, taking place immediately after his return from his holidays, and before the work of the winter commenced. It was always a very delightful function, and one at which he was seen at his brightest. They gave him their love without stint. There was a great awakening of their interest and enthusiasm on his settlement. The Sunday evening congregations soon crowded the chapel. Berry got a firm hold, which he never lost, not only on the young people but on the working classes, and strangers noted that the great majority of the worshippers were men.

Berry took a very practical interest in the work in the villages. He frequently drove out miles into the country to preach on the Sunday afternoon, and greatly cheered and strengthened those who were labouring in some obscure and difficult station. He used to speak of his church as being his Diocese, and

of himself as fulfilling all the functions of a Bishop of the early Christian churches.

Nor did he confine his interest and service to his own church and neighbourhood. He soon became recognised as the strong man and the sympathetic man, to whom the poorer ministers and the smaller churches in Staffordshire could appeal for help and guidance. He did much to promote the consolidation and extension of the work of the County Union. Elected chairman in 1887, he gave a masterly address on "The Purport of our Message, the Growing Importance of Our Work."

In the September of 1884, Berry suffered a heavy bereavement by the death of his elder brother, the Rev. Peter Rathbone Berry, pastor of the New Windsor Congregational Church, Salford, who died of consumption at the age of thirty-nine. He had followed Charles to Airedale, entering six months after his younger brother. He was an able and thoughtful man; but always having to battle against the disadvantages of delicate health, he never attained the position in the ranks of the ministry to which his undoubted gifts and genial personal qualities entitled him. His widow and three of his four sons passed away within a few years after his own death.

In 1886, Berry had a break-down in health through the severity of the winter, and visited Egypt and Palestine, returning thoroughly restored

after an absence of seven weeks, greatly refreshed in many ways by an exhilarating tour.

In the October of the same year, Berry gave one of the addresses at the People's Meeting in connection with the Autumnal Assembly of the Congregational Union at Norwich. The speech was on "What Christ has done for the People." Its force and impassioned eloquence made a great impression. The Rev. Alexander Hannay, D.D., the veteran secretary of the Union, described it as the finest appearance that any young man had made on the Union platform within his recollection.

During the same meetings, Berry made a very timely and vigorous interposition in the course of a most stormy debate, in which feeling was running too high. The tact and sagacity he displayed in a moment of excitement showed a side of him which had not been seen before by the majority of those present. It is interesting to recall his reference in that brief speech to the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, whom he had not then seen, but who was at that time on a visit to England. He paid a tribute to the magnificent services which he had rendered to humanity and religion.

In the following May, Berry spoke in the City Temple, at the annual meeting of the Church Aid and Home Missionary Society. He was the last speaker on a long programme, and in the whole course of his speech there was a constant exodus of people hurry-

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ing out to catch trains, which made effective oratory difficult. As Berry and I left the building, I remarked, "Your speech went very well." "You mean the folk went very well," was his sententious rejoinder.

During his early Wolverhampton ministry, overtures were made to him as to the possibility of his accepting the pastorate of an influential church in London, where he would have received a much larger stipend than he was having. He, however, stated at once that he could not leave Wolverhampton, as he felt that for some years, at any rate, he must continue the work to which he had been called there.

It will thus be evident that, before Berry sprang to sudden fame through the call to Plymouth Church, he was a man of influence and of recognised power, who was fast making a name for himself, not only in the Midlands but throughout the country, and was steadily working his way to the very front rank.

CHAPTER V.

THE CALL TO BROOKLYN.

As already stated, in the summer and autumn of 1886 the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher spent some months in England, and preached or lectured in many of the larger towns. On Monday, October 18th, the day before he left England, he was to lecture in Liverpool. The Board of Congregational Ministers in that city invited him to a reception, given in his honour, in the Junior Reform Club. Each member of the Board was at liberty to invite one ministerial guest. I was then at Ormskirk, and wrote to Berry asking him if he would care to come. I hardly expected him to be able to do so, on account of the distance. He sent me a telegram, "Have an engagement, but will try and come. Keep it open." He came in just as Beecher began to speak. The Rev. R. S. Holmes, secretary of the Board, asked him to propose a vote of thanks to our guest for the address he had just given, which had been a characteristic one, marked by great beauty and force. Berry's speech, though of necessity entirely unpremeditated, was recognised by all present as being singularly able. Beecher, in responding to the vote, made special reference to Berry's remarks, which had

evidently touched him deeply. At the close he made his way across the room to Berry and shook hands warmly. In the course of a brief chat, he asked him when he was coming to America again, and learning that he was intending to go in the following autumn, he said, "Then if you come you must preach for me. I ask you on my own responsibility." The promise was given, with no premonition that before the autumn Beecher would have passed away.

As Beecher drove away to his hotel he said to Major Pond that he was now glad that he had lived to visit England and to see the fruits of fifty years' teaching. He was even inclined to think that he was better appreciated in England than at home.

"The speech of the Rev. Charles A. Berry ought to have made you happy," said the Major. "If I am not mistaken," Beecher replied, "that young man will be heard from some day. He has got the right stuff in him." And again he said, "Pond, that young fellow Berry has understood me better than any man I have met since I came to England."

On his return home, Major Pond published a book giving an account of his visit to England with Beecher. Referring to the reception at Liverpool, he added his own impressions of the young man whose words had so gratified his friend. He says, "I had met no other minister in my travels through the country that so favourably impressed me—simple,"

modest, quiet, and with a force of language and logic that drew one very near to him."

At Beecher's request, Berry wrote out, as fully as he could remember, the words he had used, and they were published in America in Major Pond's book, and in England in a volume—"Henry Ward Beecher in England, 1836."

When he reached home, Beecher frequently mentioned Berry's name to his wife and more intimate friends, referred to the promise to preach at Plymouth Church in the autumn, and more than once exclaimed, "While I was in England I saw my successor."

Beecher died suddenly on March 8th of the following year—1887.

When his church, recovering itself from its first grief, had to face the responsibility of selecting a successor, the words that he had used about the gifted and sympathetic young English preacher, who had won his heart six months before he died, were naturally recalled, with the result that it was arranged that Berry should preach at Plymouth Church on October 16th and 23rd. He was accompanied on his trip by Mr. A. Baldwin Bantock, the son of his honoured friend Alderman Thomas Bantock. During his stay in New York he was the guest of Mr. John Boyle, formerly of Bolton. Immediately after his first Sunday at Brooklyn his host wrote to his brother in England, as to the impressions which Berry had made.

"Before he left our house on Sunday morning he was exceedingly nervous and apprehensive, so much so, indeed, that I was just a little fearful that he would give way under the fearful mental strain which had piled up little by little, until he sat down in the chair once occupied by Mr. Beecher. However, he stood up to his work like a man, refusing all assistance from Mr. Halliday, who had accompanied him to the platform. In the short opening prayer his voice showed how intense was his feeling, and how very trying he realised his position to be. Being very much concerned and interested myself, I shared to a large extent Mr. Berry's feelings. However, it was soon evident that Richard was becoming himself again. His prayer before the sermon was a marvel of earnestness, unction, and power, and put his vast audience *en rapport* with him. By the time the second hymn was through with he pulled himself together, rose up, gave out his text, and without further ceremony or ado he launched right into his sermon and held his hearers spellbound to the close. It goes without saying that the audience were both delighted and surprised. Mr. Berry came without much 'proclaiming.' The people expected little or nothing, and were wonderfully and agreeably disappointed. That he will receive a call to fill Mr. Beecher's pulpit is all but a certainty."

It is, perhaps, worthy of remark, as illustrating

the splendid audacity of the young preacher, in face of a trying ordeal, that each of the four sermons was preached, I believe, without manuscript, and that one of them had never been fully written. The feeling was spontaneous and universal that in the young English pastor, not yet thirty-five years of age, Plymouth Church had discovered the man who, more than any other they had known, showed himself kindred in spirit to the illustrious leader they had lost. It became at once evident that the large congregation—made up of many elements, happily fused into unity under the genius of Beecher—were unanimous in their acceptance of a successor as they had hardly hoped to be. On the Monday after Berry's first Sabbath it was freely said by the American Press that there was a sense of relief in the prevailing consciousness that they had heard for the first time a possible successor to their departed pastor. Dr. Rossiter W. Raymond said: "This is the strongest man we have had yet. He has more of Mr. Beecher's broad catholic spirit and more of his characteristics than anyone who has preached since his death. He may be the coming man, and how strange it will be if it should be so, unknown to all of us, but introduced by Mr. Beecher himself." This is one of many similar utterances made at the time by leaders of the church.

Before he returned from America the world knew that Berry was almost certain to be unanimously

chosen to succeed Henry Ward Beecher, and he sprang to sudden fame throughout the English-speaking world.

As soon as a meeting could be convened under the statutory notice, the Brooklyn Church was called together, and decided to invite him to the pastorate. This was confirmed the same evening at a meeting of the society, or pew-holders. There was only one dissentient vote given, and that was cast solely on the ground that the man chosen was not an American. Inquiries had been pursued, in regard to Berry's record and standing here, by Mr. Shearman, a member of the church, who was on a visit to England, and he had cabled back an enthusiastic commendation. The call was backed by every assurance and inducement and plea which might help to secure Berry's acceptance. It is a gracious testimony to the fine spirit of the two churches most closely concerned, and to the estimate they had formed of the man who had the confidence and affection of both, that inducements such as weigh most with the world were never so much as named in the anxious crisis. Plymouth Church never appealed to the personal ambition which would have made the lure almost resistless to the average young man with a name to make and a career to achieve. Money considerations were never raised either by the American or the English church. The amount offered was mentioned in the business communication from Plymouth Church, and there it was left. A pro-

minent member of Plymouth Church said: "On the part of neither Mr. Berry nor the church is the matter one of salary, but rather of his being convinced that there is work here that he should do, and our believing that he is the man to do it."

Dr. Raymond, who dealt with the grave and delicate problems which the situation presented with a fine Christian high-mindedness, such as indeed characterised the spirit and action of the whole church, placed very weighty considerations before his friend with the view of securing his acceptance of the call.

In a private letter addressed to Mr. Berry, Dr. Raymond said:—

"Permit me to recount, in scanty outline at least, some of the elements in this case which I feel we may fairly urge upon you as entitled to weight in your consideration. But first I would remove from your mind the thought—if any such exists there—that a constant inevitable comparison with Mr. Beecher will be the fate of anyone who becomes his successor. There would be no such paralysing atmosphere surrounding you. We do not want an imitator of Mr. Beecher. That dear portrait will remain in our hearts undimmed. We do not propose to overlay it with another picture intended to be a copy of it. The man who would 'challenge comparison' with Henry Ward Beecher is not the man for us. What we need and desire is one who shares our love for his

memory and will lead us in the spirit and work he bequeathed us. This you are.

“Now with regard to the peculiar field and attitude of Plymouth Church. To my mind, the history of the world is to be greatly influenced by the history of this nation: the future of this nation turns on the future of religion among us: and this, again, depends upon the issue of the conflict now impending in America between religion and irreligion—a conflict in which I believe that a broad evangelical Christianity, freed from theological and ecclesiastical bondage and filled with the enthusiasm of love, will alone be victorious. Such a gospel our beloved pastor preached, and such we have heard from you. But even among the Congregational churches of America, which should be the most progressive, this spirit is as yet far from universal. The battle which has been fought and won among the Congregational churches in England is still before us. If you come to us it will be to reinforce, at a critical time and at a critical point, the advocates of liberal, democratic Christianity. We do not mean that Plymouth Church shall abdicate the position of influence it has hitherto maintained in this respect; and we believe that under your administration that position would be firmly held.

* * * * *

“In view of all these circumstances, I may assert without exaggeration that the platform of Plymouth Church—commanding as it does by historic claims

the attention of men, and situated where it can reach the springs of municipal, metropolitan, and national opinion—is to-day the most important post in Protestant Christendom. I would have you consider what can be done for the Master by preaching from such a centre His gospel of love—how the local work, glorious in itself, will be but the burning of fuel that supplies a glowing light to shine through the continent and the world. Perhaps there never was a case in which men outside were so eagerly listening to hear what voice should sound from the place so long musical and now silent. The message from Plymouth pulpit, whatever it be, is sure to be heard. If you will sink all thought of yourself as the utterer of it, permit others to judge for you, as they can indeed do better than you can, of your fitness in that respect, and think only of the message itself—you know that the word that you have received is the word which the world needs and waits and longs to hear—the word of the Christ of Galilee to the men of the New World and the New Age.

“One thing more. You may ask why we do not call upon an American. My reply is that we want you irrespective of the accident of birth, and we find in you that thorough sympathy with American ideas, the absence of which would indeed be an insuperable objection, whether it were found under our flag or another. Moreover, in one respect we prefer you as an Englishman, namely, if we can gain you as a

Congregational minister in America we shall be more powerfully reinforcing the defenders of the new theology than we could do by simply transferring to our pulpit some minister already here. In one case we shall contribute to the cause a new champion; in the other we should simply shift the place of an old one. From the more assured, victorious liberty of English Congregationalism we ask you to come over and help us."

The New York Press took a vivid interest in the problem of the Plymouth pulpit, and Berry had no reason to complain of its attitude towards him. The papers were universally appreciative and sympathetic. One can hardly imagine the great London dailies taking a similar interest in any vacant metropolitan pulpit, however illustrious. Some of the breezy journalists were confident that if Berry accepted the call he would soon shed the last trace of his British descent and upbringing and quite overcome the effects of this undoubted drawback. We had flattered ourselves and him in thinking of him as almost a typical Englishman, characterised by all our best national traits. The moment of disillusionment soon came. We were told: "Probably no Englishman could be found who differs so widely from the typical John Bull as Mr. Berry. He has the active, alert air of an American, and his voice has only the slightest trace of a foreign accent. In his ideas Mr. Berry probably comes as near the average

American as it is possible for a man born under a sovereign, although he is tainted with the free-trade heresy as too many young Americans are."

In contrast with the general tone of the American Press, it is not pleasant to recall the attitude of a certain section of the English Press toward Berry during the critical days when he was in utmost perplexity as to his duty. Several of the "society" and satirical papers made merry at his expense. "What hypocrisy it all was for a man to pretend to pray and wait for Divine guidance about a call that would quadruple his present income! *They* knew how he would decide, and *he* knew. Then why all these pious pretences?" They had their answer in a few days, and that answer was an indirect but cutting rebuke to their ill-timed and indecent pleasantries. To say that Berry did not gain some quiet enjoyment from their discomfiture would be to confess him more than human. But their sneers had no effect upon his decision. Had he decided to go, he assured his church, "he should have gone and should have felt the weight of no man's blame and no man's sneer, for he had simply tried to be loyal to the resolve he had made as a lad to consecrate himself to Jesus Christ, and to men for His sake." It ought to be said, and is said with regret, that, so far as Berry knew, not one of these journals displayed the love of fairness on which Englishmen pride themselves by subsequently expressing regret for the injustice which,

in the supreme crisis of his life, they had done their young fellow-countryman, who was seeking to meet it in a serious spirit, utterly free from all sordid self-seeking.

The reception of the call to Brooklyn led to days of intense and devout perplexity. Berry spoke of that time when his own mind was in suspense as being the time of "the greatest trial of his life." Those who were with him will never forget the mental struggle of those momentous days. The anxiety to learn the will of God and to discern the path of duty was supreme. His own people showed their affection in every possible way. Many and wistful and strenuous were the voices that said "Stay." But the voices that cried across the sea, "Come over and help us," seemed to ring with the imperiousness of the voice of God. The light from above for which he waited seemed to make long tarrying.

I was to preach at Queen Street on the Sunday. When I left Berry in Southport on the Friday he was still in uncertainty. On the Sunday morning, however, a letter reached the deacons intimating that the call had been declined. I shall never forget the scene when, in the course of the service, the letter was read. The church was crowded; the faces upturned to the pulpit were wistful, sad, and apprehensive. But when, after listening to a forcible statement of the broad and vital issues presented by the invitation to America, the sentence was read by

Mr. Bantock, "I must remain in England," the moment will never be forgotten by any who were present. There was no sound except a rustle and sigh of relief—not the slightest breach of Christian decorum, only the silent and unconscious tokens of a relief and thankfulness, too deep for words and outward signs. His people realised the responsibilities they were assuming in retaining him, and in promising him as their pastor a sphere of usefulness, a ministry as wide as that which would have been his had he chosen to accept one of the most illustrious pulpits in the world, in succession to one of the greatest preachers of the age.

Berry's letter was as follows:—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—The invitation extended to me to succeed Henry Ward Beecher in the pastorate of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, has received from me the long and earnest consideration which its importance demanded. That invitation was in every way extraordinary and exceptional. The Plymouth pulpit is regarded as one of the most potent centres of world-wide influence. Associated with it in undying lustre is the glory of a famous name; attached to it cling the memories of an unexampled ministry. Round it gather in eager and loving discipleship many of the foremost servants of the new civilisation. To it in anxious expectancy, and from many lands, turn the oppressed and poor, the weary and the doubting, the plodding seekers after light, the

strenuous toilers after liberty, and the call which invites me to be its new spokesman comes to me laden with the weight of a spontaneous unanimity and the urgency of a splendid enthusiasm.

“It has been impossible to consider this call within the customary limits, or to decide it upon ordinary grounds. You, as well as I, have realised the wide-reaching import of the issue. From the first you have seen with me that in the consideration of this question all purely local and personal interests must be rigorously excluded, that only the broadest claims of service in their denominational and national aspects must be admitted, and that a decision must be taken under the sole and sacred sanction of duty to religion and humanity. The broad question thus submitted to me has been the occasion of long perplexity and ceaseless study. I have, however, gratefully to acknowledge the generous assistance and the valuable counsel of our own trusted leaders, and of men in the front ranks of English life, whose breadth of view, whose disinterestedness, whose zeal for religion and humanity have given exceptional weight to their representations. These representations are in every case identical with the pleas you have urged upon me. They relate to our national life, to the questions religious, theological, ecclesiastical, and political which are coming up for settlement, and to the growing need in England for a broad evangelical pulpit which shall make religion

credible and effective, and which shall help to solve the pressing problems which loom threateningly around us.

"In view of these representations, I have carefully and gratefully weighed your proposals to give me such additional help as shall preserve the effectiveness of Queen Street, while liberating me from details and for a larger service to my faith and fatherland. I cannot deny that your proposals, which are as intelligent as they are generous, have grown upon me the more I have considered them. You offer me a national work in England. You urge upon me with affectionate persistence the claims of religion at home. You promise me conditions and assistance favourable to the brightest service. The call, I admit, is strong. The claim upon me seems unanswerable. With painful anxiety I have devoted all these matters to thought and prayer, withdrawing myself as far as possible from the natural urgency of emotion, and from the pleas of self-interest, seeking a mood of perfect abandonment to the will of my Master.

"At last my decision is taken. God grant it be a true one. I must remain in England. I must go on at any cost with the work to which I have consecrated my life. I will not detain you with reminders of the fresh call upon you which arises out of this decision. I know you, I love and trust you. I pray our larger work may win larger results for Christ and for men. I cannot close

without asking you to join me in prayer for our brethren and friends in America. My heart is pained beyond degree when I think of their disappointment. I can never forget their generous love and appreciation, nor the largeness of the honour they have placed upon me. Had duty bid me go, I should have gone with every assurance of bright days to come. That I am honestly following what I have judged to be my path of service will, I am assured, win their approval and conquer their regret. With the old love multiplied, I am your friend and pastor,

“CHARLES ALBERT BERRY.”

On the previous day Mr. Berry cabled the following message to Plymouth Church :—“Charles Albert Berry greets Plymouth, appreciates its confidence, and reciprocates its affection, prays for its prosperity, but cannot accept pastorate. Home claims inexorable. Duty here commands. Letter mailed. God bless and guide you.” Dr. Lyman Abbott, who shortly afterwards accepted the pastorate, was the preacher at Plymouth Church, and in giving the disappointing message to the people said, “If I do not greatly misread, he remains, not merely to be the pastor of Wolverhampton, but to be one of the leaders of English, liberal, progressive thought in the great work of the present century.”

Many have asked whether Berry ever regretted his decision ; whether the work he found himself able to accomplish here was to his own mind

a sufficient compensation for all that he had refused. He became more and more warmly attached to America and her people, and yet he did not regret his decision to remain in England.

It has been suggested, and suggested by those who had a sincere appreciation of his great powers, that his refusal was prompted quite as much by mistrust of himself as by the measurement of opportunities. He had made, say such critics, a sober and accurate estimate of his own powers, and knew in his own heart that he had neither brilliance of genius nor staying power such as would have enabled him to maintain the splendid traditions of Beecher's pulpit.

Some may have got this impression from the pleasantries with which Berry parried questions as to why he did not go to America. "Succeed Beecher?" he once said. "Why, it would have been a penny whistle trying to succeed a cathedral organ!" He would quote at his own expense the remark made by Oliver Wendell Holmes when asked if he was going to fill a certain man's place. "Not exactly: I'm not going to fill his place—only to rattle around in it."

It was, however, undoubtedly the measurement of opportunity, and not the measurement of his own capacity, which was the determining factor in his refusal. He had formed an estimate of his own powers which was justified by his later career. The

growing success of his work, the manifold directions in which his influence extended, not only among the churches but also in political and civic life, all point to the conclusion that he would not have been found wanting in any essential quality had he chosen the United States as his field of work in early manhood. It is an interesting though futile speculation to forecast what the influence of the Plymouth pulpit would have been had Berry accepted the pastorate in 1887. His influence there would not long have been dependent upon any resemblance to Beecher, either real or imaginary. The two men were alike in largeness of heart, breadth of view, vigour of mind, faculty for ready, brilliant, and impassioned speech, and in personal magnetic charm. Berry conformed to Beecher's ideal of the Christian minister: "The preacher should be the manliest of men, full of vitality, versatility, and vigour." Their common sympathy with the oppressed and the unfortunate was voiced in a racy colloquialism quoted from Beecher at Plymouth Church as being characteristic also of Berry: "I have been all my life for the under dog." But the two men in temperament and genius were yet very unlike. Berry's ministry would have built up a fabric in Brooklyn very unlike the life-work of Beecher, but equally influential, though cast in less stormy and heroic days.

We do not know how far distinctive American life and institutions would have moulded his virile and

growing mind, had Berry gone there at thirty-five. He was versatile, he was responsive to atmosphere and environment, his power of adaptability was great, and those who have been in the best position to judge were well assured that he would have become at least as influential in America as he became here. The only fear which those who knew him best might have had would have been concern as to whether the high pressure at which he would have had to live and work, under unaccustomed climatic and social conditions, might not have told disastrously upon health which, with all his capacity for exacting and strenuous labour, was never robust, and whether this might not have hastened an end which came too soon, even in his native land.

I have often said that, when Berry returned from America, it was with the dominant feeling in his own mind that the call to the work there was imperative. He was not dazzled by the brilliant prospects held out. He showed a modest sobriety of judgment wonderful in so young a man. As Dr. Fairbairn testified at the time, "While his heart clung to England, there were almost invincible reasons at first compelling him to go. He dealt with the call as became a man that was burdened with a great responsibility and who was equal to the responsibility that burdened him. All ministers felt that the Ministry had received honour in what had been done and in what had been resisted." The affection and confidence shown by his

new friends in America, their perfect unanimity when unanimity could hardly have been expected, their picture of the possibilities open to the man who, in coming days, should stand in Plymouth pulpit, the mysterious chain of events that took him into that pulpit, made him feel that the voice from the West, "Come over and help us," was a summons as divine as was that from Macedonia to Paul. It was only when the home-voices spoke of the work he could do here, among his own people, that he first wavered, and then slowly, and with some natural reluctance, yielded to the conviction that he must stay in England. As confirming this view it may be interesting to quote a letter which he wrote at the time to Mrs. J. J. Colman, of Norwich.

"I am still in great perplexity and am anxious above all things to free myself from all considerations which would disable me from discerning the way and will of my Master. At first, I must frankly confess, this call came with such unexpectedness, with so many subtle accompaniments, and with such splendid unanimity, that I was almost forced to regard it as an imperative call to duty. Since then, however, considerations have been urged upon me of a religious and a political kind, not by my own church merely, but by leaders in both spheres throughout the country, that in the aggregate constitute an almost unanswerable call to remain where I am. My church has acted in a splendid manner, and, while putting

aside all selfish pleas, has put before me a representation which it will be hard to answer. My decision on the issue put before me must be taken in a few days now, and I am earnestly seeking the light Divine that I may be rightly guided."

It is sometimes implied that the call to Brooklyn "made" Berry, gave him a popularity and an influence which he would never have won on his own merits by his work in his own country. There can be no doubt that he owed much to it as regards his renown outside the borders of Congregationalism. It gave him a name in some circles of English life which he would never have won in the ordinary paths of home ministerial service. A man who refused an offer that would have more than quadrupled his stipend was looked upon by many as a "freak," and there was a rush to see him.

In regard to his real influence, it may be safely said that the American call only hastened a fame which he was slowly and steadily winning before this sudden notoriety set him on a pinnacle. In five or in ten years at most, he would have become one of our foremost leaders.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NATIONAL WORK.

THE period immediately succeeding Berry's call to America was the critical epoch of his life. He had to justify a sudden and splendid reputation. It had been quickly gained, by what almost seemed a *coup d'état*, and it might have been almost as quickly lost, had he failed to win from the English churches the endorsement of the verdict of the American church that had made him famous in a day. He might have become an unfulfilled prophecy, not unlike the politician whom he once described as a man who had his future behind him.

He had also to show himself capable of doing that national work which he had stayed in England to accomplish. He was to prove that it had not been audacious presumption on the part of the young man of thirty-five to predict for himself that he could help in the solution of problems such as were looming before the men of England, and that he could thus render service to the Christianity of the nation.

All this was soon put to the test, for he was at once besieged by requests for help from far and near. He became in the churches the man of the hour. No

summary can be given of the exacting engagements of the three or four busy years that followed. The record of work is marvellous. He preached at the annual meetings of many of the County Unions, at the opening of new churches, and the like.

It is not too much to say that, while he impressed all who heard him with the sense of his power as a preacher, he equally delighted all who met him in social intercourse by his personality. They found him unaffected, free from petty conceits, putting on no airs, and unspoilt by a success that would have turned the head of a weaker man. To his brother ministers, to the humblest whom he met, he was never the condescending patron, but always approachable, sympathetic, and brotherly. All felt the charm of his *bonhomie*, geniality and kindly humour. All respected the absolute self-forgetfulness shown in his willingness to serve, if service were at all possible.

He became conscious in many ways that his refusal of the American offer had not been without a great moral effect on the country at large. It had silenced many a sneer; it had, possibly, even put some cynic to shame. The man in the street could respect a minister who had proved that he had not his price. It is not too much to say that the Christian ministry gained in a reputation for disinterestedness by Berry's action.

In the May of 1888 he preached in the City

Temple the Annual Sermon to Young Men on behalf of the London Missionary Society. The church was crowded, and hundreds could not obtain admission. The occasion was an ordeal. Berry was on his trial. The chief men, as well as the rank and file of the Congregational ministry, were sitting in judgment on him. Had he come to stay? Was his fame the outcome of a stroke of American eccentricity? What had been the secret of his fascination? These were among the questions to be answered that night. Berry could not but be nervous in prospect of this ordeal, yet he soon proved himself to be a "Master of Assemblies." His subject was "The Travail of the Ages" (I. Kings viii. 57, 60). The sermon appears in his volume "Vision and Duty." His hearers were impressed by his virility, his buoyant optimism, and his literary charm. They remarked on the clear-cut and epigrammatic sentences, which he drove home with much vigour. Though almost inevitably lacking in the easy naturalness and spontaneity of his later utterances, it won the hearty encomiums of his critical audience.

At the Autumnal Assembly of the Congregational Union, held in Nottingham in the following October, he gave an address at the Young People's Meeting, held in advocacy of the Guild movement which was then being started. In the spring of 1889 he preached the Home Missionary Sermon at the annual meetings of the Baptist Union, and

shortly afterwards spoke in the Metropolitan Tabernacle on behalf of the Liberation Society.

In 1888 the Congregational Union of England and Wales celebrated the bicentenary of the Revolution of 1688. A series of historical lectures was delivered in the Memorial Hall. Berry was selected as one of the first lecturers, the others being Drs. Fairbairn, Rogers, Mackennal, and Mr. J. Carvell Williams, M.P. Berry's subject was "Religious Equality: What remains to be done for its Complete Accomplishment." * The subject proved itself congenial to his practical mind and was handled in a masterly way. He dealt incidentally with concrete grievances. In the main, however, his contention was that the existence of a favoured church was a hindrance in the way of the realisation of the many-sided Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God was not synonymous with a church, nor yet with all the churches put together. It included them all, it was not included by any. Every church was essential to its incoming; he had no quarrel with any church *qua* church.

It seemed to him that every church represented the temperamental peculiarity or the intellectual peculiarity of great bodies of men. He was convinced that only through the church which answered the peculiar aspirations of each

* Bicentenary Lectures—Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1889.

man's whole life could that man consciously or fully find entrance into the Kingdom of God. He did not look for universal Congregationalism any more than he expected universal Episcopalianism. But he was certain Episcopalianism was as true an answer to the cravings of some as Congregationalism was to those of others. That each might exist, and exist on a fair field and without favour, was essential to the religious needs of men and to the completion of God's work among us. But to have one church elected by the State to supremacy, and to have the idea disseminated that that church is *the* church, is to do violence to the grand varieties of spiritual life, and to the splendid inclusiveness of Christ's new brotherhood. Once let *all* the churches meet on an equal platform, and join in the emulation of usefulness, and we should see in England a large and intelligent revival of faith, of devotion, of brotherhood.

This was the high ground that Berry always took in the advocacy of Disestablishment. We have here the germ of that which took shape later in his work for Christian Reunion, and in his advocacy of the Free Church Council Movement. He delivered this lecture in many of the large towns in England in connection with this Bicentenary Celebration.

Meanwhile Berry was rendering unstinted service to churches far and near. The work he accomplished

was marvellous. His correspondence became so heavy that it became a serious tax on time and strength. In addition to this outside work he maintained that of his own church, and took an active part in the public affairs of his own town. He had increased ministerial assistance provided, but a large church, with many branches, made exacting demands on him. The congregations crowded the chapel to its utmost capacity. During the first complete year after his refusal of the Brooklyn call there was a net increase of more than a hundred members to the parent church.

This increase was partly the result of a mission which he conducted in the spring of 1888. Having just settled at Queen Street as his colleague, I was by his side all through this effort, and can testify that, although the natural bent of his powers was not towards distinctively evangelistic preaching, never man strove harder to preach the truth of the Gospel simply, convincingly, and persuasively. Night after night in the inquiry-room, after an exhausting service, he remained till late, dealing with individual cases of penitence and perplexity. The mission accomplished much in leading large numbers, especially of young people, to decision, as did a similar one held some five years later.

An old man, unkempt and out-at-elbows, eccentric and with a touch of genius, used to come and hear Berry. He pronounced him the only preacher he

had ever heard who was worth hearing, and he wrote Berry rather grimy letters nearly every night, telling him how he thought he had done his work and giving him various suggestions, practical and otherwise, for doing it better. I remember one night, after Berry had been preaching on "The Perils of Neglect," his ragged monitor wrote thus: "I was sorry for you to-night, Berry. Any good old Methodist would have made those folks tremble. You did your best, but, try how you would, *you couldn't get up peril enough.*"

The appearances that Berry made at the great gatherings in which he had to take a prominent part were both happy and impressive. He would not have claimed for himself that he was always at his best. He was his own severest critic. As was natural, perhaps, what we may call his great efforts sometimes suffered from over-elaborate preparation, and thus seemed somewhat laboured. There were at times marks of the immaturity or the impulsiveness of youth. He had not yet gained the confidence in his own powers or the mastery over himself which came to him later, and that made of him the most ready and natural of speakers. Sometimes his anxiety to score an oratorical point led him to the turn of a phrase that his own fastidious self-judgment made him afterwards wish had been expressed otherwise. But he soon outgrew, almost completely, these early defects, and became one of the best half-dozen popular speakers of the day.

Berry did not confine his labours to ecclesiastical fields. He threw himself eagerly into political work. He became a power not only in Wolverhampton and the Midland Counties, but in the Liberal party. In Birmingham and in the district around that city Liberalism was suffering severely from the disintegration of the party wrought by the Home Rule question. Among other losses this had led to the withdrawal of Dr. R. W. Dale from political work. Berry stepped manfully into the breach. Not only were his services of great value as a member of the Committee of the National Liberal Federation—a position he held until his resignation at the close of 1895—but he soon proved himself one of the most effective platform speakers in the country. In March, 1889, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Parnell, Sir Charles Russell, and Berry were the principal speakers at a National Demonstration against the Coercion Act. The meeting was held in St. James's Hall while the Parnell Commission was sitting and just after the exposure of the Pigott forgeries. In the following month Sir Charles Russell and Berry were again the principal speakers at a meeting in the Birmingham Town Hall in connection with an important bye-election in that city. He also spoke at the annual meetings of the National Liberal Federation in Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool. These are but samples of the important and exacting political work which Berry was doing at this time. He took the highest ground in political

questions, as in all questions. He would not let himself be swayed by opportunism or party expediency. He laboured for the hallowing of politics. They were an essential part of applied Christianity. He never introduced party politics into his preaching. It was his constant endeavour to bring the truth that he preached into politics. His own words were: "I never yet spoke on a political platform that did not become to me a Christian pulpit." }

He was being constantly urged to enter Parliament. Several times what were practically safe seats were offered to him, and such arrangements, financial and otherwise, suggested as would have enabled him to maintain that position while still being able to preach occasionally and even to retain his present or some other influential pastorate. Had he acceded to these proposals, he had both oratorical and administrative abilities to have achieved any career that personal ambition might have coveted. But his answer expressed his own settled convictions as to the supremacy of the Christian pulpit.

"The platform it could offer me would be neither so high nor so broad as the pulpit. I am blessed with a singularly free-minded people, and I enjoy absolute liberty of utterance. Further, I feel increasingly that the petty questions that divide political parties are completely overshadowed by the larger question of how to realise the Kingdom of God in the State."

Berry's services were of the utmost value to the cause of progressive education. He could always be relied upon for a lucid and telling exposition of his views. He advocated Bible reading and religious instruction in day schools, and this seemed to him to strengthen his position when he demanded that in State-aided schools the teaching should be unsectarian. In the widespread agitation that followed the introduction of the Education Bill of 1896 Berry was well to the fore, in his denunciation of what he regarded as a revolutionary and reactionary measure, and he made several speeches on important occasions, giving trenchant expression to his views.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRICE OF THE NATIONAL WORK.

BERRY was not allowed to continue his arduous work without interruption. The years 1890-1 brought to him and to the church at Queen Street much anxiety. One crisis seemed to follow closely on another. The church was carrying out a large scheme for increasing the efficiency of its branches, including the erection of a model village chapel at Wall Heath, of a Sunday school at Shipley, and the rebuilding of the mission-room at York Street. Queen Street Chapel was closed for renovation, and services were being held in the Agricultural Hall. This large building was crowded to excess. Hundreds went to hear Berry there who would not go to hear him in his own church. He realised the opportunity that this afforded him, and made splendid use of it. The services held there were very memorable.

One Sunday morning in June, 1890, Berry quietly announced to his people that he had declined a call to Westminster Chapel, London, the scene of the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Martin, one of the most saintly men and eloquent preachers of the past generation. He had not taken his own

people into his confidence in regard to this call, as he felt he could not add to their anxieties during what was, to them, a time of exceptional strain and effort.

The position offered to Berry at Westminster had many attractions. The chapel, seating three thousand people, stood almost within a stone's-throw of Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. What more fitting centre could there be for a man who aspired to do a national work than at the very heart of our national life? Could not a man like Berry, with gifts which had won him a world-wide fame, make that pulpit almost as influential as that of St. Paul's or the Abbey? Could not that church be made into something resembling a Nonconformist Cathedral, whither visitors to London might resort to find Congregational worship and preaching at its best? Could Berry as a provincial minister exert the influence he could as a London pastor? If a London pastorate were sought, could he have one more congenial and influential than Westminster promised to become under his ministry? These were some of the questions that Berry had been compelled to ask himself before declining the call; which he did, not only on the ground that he could not then be spared from Wolverhampton, but also because he felt that his national work could be more effectively done from a provincial than from a metropolitan centre.

THE PRICE OF THE NATIONAL WORK. 85

In October, 1890, Berry preached before the Congregational Union at Swansea. His sermon was on "Power from on High," and created a very deep and lasting spiritual impression. There was little attempt at oratorical display. The utterance was full of passionate though restrained emotion. It was the outcome of a vivid realisation of the supreme necessity of the hour. The churches were in need of something which no splendour of equipment could impart, which no zeal of service could achieve. In the promised power of the Holy Spirit they were to find the answer to all their problems, their perplexities, their needs.

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In the following spring Berry was beset by a grave and perplexing anxiety. He was requested to allow himself to stand for election as Secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in succession to Dr. Alexander Hannay. This request came from the General Committee of the Union, on the recommendation of a special sub-committee appointed to make a nomination. Almost simultaneously with this request came a call to the pastorate of the church at Brixton. He had never preached there, and the spontaneous and hearty character of the invitation, together with his loving admiration for its former illustrious pastor, Baldwin Brown, made the offer an attractive one.

The position of Secretary of the Union seemed at first sight to have no sort of allurements to a man like

Berry, who realised that his vocation was to preach. Many who knew him most intimately were surprised that he even considered it. To exchange the work, however onerous, which he was then doing for the routine of a secretarial office, would have seemed impossible to a man of his eager, versatile temperament. The overtures came to him utterly unsought. He was never for a moment an aspirant to the post. It would have brought him neither financial gain nor social prestige, and would have entailed much work which he knew would be irksome and tedious.

That Berry entertained the proposal for a single day was owing to his absolute loyalty to the purpose of his life, which was to render the largest service to the churches and to the Kingdom of Christ. He brushed aside resolutely all personal considerations and preferences. What possibilities did the secretariat hold for him? He had great dreams in his heart, great projects in his brain, in regard to the Church Catholic. He saw a great future for Congregationalism. Could he help to realise these most in the secretarial or in the pastoral office? Knowing his own faculty for statesmanship, could he do more to shape Congregational policy and guide its enterprise, and find freer play for the pursuit of his own ideals and enthusiasms, in an official position than he could in the pastorate? These were to be the determining factors.

He declined the Brixton call on the ground that, should he be guided to the retention of the pastoral

office, his duty would be to exercise its functions among his beloved people, who had originated and sustained very special conditions for his usefulness. He could not, however, come to a final decision about the secretaryship. In this painful crisis he was not treated with too much chivalry and generosity in some quarters. Much irresponsible and anonymous criticism was allowed to appear in some of the religious journals. Few were aware of the pressure that was brought to bear upon him, in favour of his acceptance of the office, by many of the leaders who, in an earlier crisis, had counselled him to remain in Wolverhampton. His perplexity was great. He was overwrought with the effects of exhausting labours, far and near. The rush of incessant toil for three or four years had told its tale, and he was on the verge of a serious breakdown in health. On the first Sunday morning in April, in announcing his decision in regard to Brixton, he spoke of the distress of heart that accompanied his perplexity of mind. Shortly after the service he was seized with sudden illness. During the week he was very prostrate, but before the following Sunday he had signified his refusal to accept nomination for the secretaryship, saying, "I have sought only, and I have sought earnestly, to discover my Master's will in respect of the sphere and character of my service to men. It is because He has seemed to guide me to the retention of

the pastoral office that I remain obediently and contentedly where I am."

It at once became evident that Berry was in a more precarious condition of health than had been at first supposed. The symptoms developed into threatened paralysis of the throat, and were serious and even ominous. He lost full control of the organs of speech, and had a difficulty and hesitancy in utterance which greatly alarmed his friends. He rested for some weeks in the Channel Islands and elsewhere, but returned home no better. His medical man enjoined perfect rest for some time to come, and at the beginning of June his church passed a resolution releasing him from the duties of the pastorate until the end of the year, and also generously decided to supply his pulpit during his absence and to defray the expenses of the lengthened voyage it was suggested that he should undertake. His neighbour, Dr. Dale, wrote him as follows, when this announcement was made:—

"June 1st, 1891.

"MY DEAR BERRY,—I see by this morning's *Daily Post* that you are ordered to take a long rest. That is a dreary kind of duty; but duties come from God, and this transfigures them. I trust that the rest will restore you to perfect vigour, and shall not forget to pray that it may. And if I may judge from my own experience, these enforced times of rest are God's great opportunities for filling

us with light and power—our great opportunities for coming to know the greatness of the Christian redemption. I often say that Paul would never have been the saint he was—would never have had the knowledge he had—but for his imprisonments.

“Not that we are always able—especially in the earlier weeks of rest—to reach the heights: quiet, trusting submission is often all that is possible for a time. So we learn our place and come to a right temper in the presence of God.

“You know how we love and trust and honour you. Your weakness is ours; your strength will be our joy. God be with you.—I am, my dear Berry, yours affectionately, “R. W. DALE.”

Berry was absent from his pulpit for eleven months. This was at a period when he was greatly needed to direct the new enterprises his church was undertaking. His absence made heavy demands upon the fidelity and self-sacrifice of his devoted people. With great concern they had been watching their gifted pastor wearing himself out by incessant labours. The breakdown, when it came, had not been brought about by his work for them, though that had been arduous, but by the strain of outside engagements.

Is not the modern Church very pitiless to its front-rank men? The service it demands of them is costly, almost sacrificial. The type of genius which

makes a man a great preacher is often enshrined in a delicate and finely-strung nervous organisation. The finest souls have not learnt the ignoble art of taking care of themselves. If a man has the mind to work, he may work until he is all but worn out before the churches will stay their insatiable demands. They trade on the public curiosity to see and hear the newest man who has become the latest ecclesiastical sensation. When a great effort is to be successfully made, when a great occasion is to be worthily celebrated, they rely on the inspiration of some eloquent leader brought from afar. The result is that men of the spirit of Charles Berry often fall in their prime and before they have reached their best.

I opened and dealt with his correspondence for months together. When the churches might have been supposed to know how ill he was, there was little, if any, decline in the number and urgency of the appeals. A church, a committee, can manifest an inconsiderate egoism in its very appeals for help in the doing of its highest Christian work. Sometimes the plea ran thus. After a setting forth of their exceptionally special claims, as the writers saw them, they would wind up with this magnanimous exhortation: "We are sorry to hear you are far from well. *After you have been to us* you really must take more care of yourself." Sometimes there was a refreshing gleam of humour in

the appeal for a sermon. "DEAR BERRY,—I overheard you say last week to a circle of friends that our town is altogether above the Gospel and far too superior to be saved by grace, and the only town in England where they can get up a great popular demonstration on behalf of anti-vaccination. With this opinion of us, will you undertake a desperate missionary expedition, and preach," etc.

The appeals for help of all sorts came to Berry year in and year out, and for long he had to employ an amanuensis to deal almost exclusively with his correspondence. It makes one think that Christian England is an exacting, almost a pitiless, master to the men it loves, and to the men who serve it best.

When Berry returned from his tour round the world, Dr. Mackennal was one of many friends who wrote and begged him not to accept so many public engagements. "I told him," says Dr. Mackennal, "that we had discovered to our great gladness that he had it in him to render much more efficient service as a mature man than he was doing as a young man, and that therefore his life was very precious to us. He replied with great frankness and simplicity. He was evidently touched by my appeal, and I think he had some suspicion of his own that he was squandering powers which he ought to cultivate. But he did not hold out much hope that he would follow my advice. He

said—and it is this I should like to see impressed on our churches and committees and managers of societies, whose action makes me wish to preach on a new text, 'The tender mercies of the saints are cruel'—he said, 'I wish you would write to our churches as you are writing to me. You have no idea of the insistence of people that I should serve them, although they know how poor my health is. It is simply cruel.'"

The service our great men are called upon to render becomes a serious problem to their churches. The Queen Street Church volunteered to set Berry free for a national work. They cheerfully made great sacrifices. But in their case, as in the case of other churches, it becomes a grave question whether they were justified in permitting their pastor to undertake outside labours to such an extent that an absence of six or twelve months was occasionally required for his restoration to full vigour, with the risk that his health might be irreparably injured and his life shortened.

I have been urged to plead that Congregationalism should make some provision for national men. Can the Union set apart one or two of its finest and most popular men to do work for all the churches such as Berry was doing in his busiest years? Can we free them from pastoral responsibility and make it possible for them to help the churches small and great? It would mean a great sacrifice for men

who might be named, to renounce the delights of the pastoral office and undertake a larger ministry for all the churches of our order. But this work might then be done without its being the serious menace to health that exists when the two forms of ministry are combined, as in the case of Berry and others of the pick and flower of our ministry.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROUND THE WORLD.

BERRY's first plan for his journey was that in going round the world he should sail to New York, proceeding to Vancouver, Japan, Java, New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, China, India, and home. He intended to visit as many of the London Missionary Society's stations as he could take by the way. This programme he was compelled very considerably to modify. He was assured that it would be madness for him in his state of health to touch Japan, China, or India, at the season proposed, so he ultimately decided to visit Australia by way of the Pacific and to return home by Suez.

Berry sailed from Liverpool in the *City of Paris* in June, 1891. Among his fellow-passengers was Mr. Rudyard Kipling. "Mr. Kipling," says Berry, "was travelling *incog.* as Mr. Macdonald. It was modest of him to suppose that he could pass unrecognised, and pathetic to see an overworked and much-sought-after man struggling to get a bit of rest behind a paste-board shutter of concealment. I believe he regarded me as a deadly enemy when, before leaving the Mersey, he found that I had

'spotted' him. He was with his uncle, my good travelling companion for several subsequent weeks, the genial and gifted Wesleyan professor, the Rev F. W. Macdonald. Through our mutual friend, negotiations were immediately opened up between Kipling and myself, and a treaty of silence agreed upon amid declarations of everlasting friendship. But alas for the vanity of human wishes! America reads Kipling and admires him, and whom America loves she photographs and puts in shop windows for sale. The third day out an American doctor from Wisconsin came up to me and said, 'That friend of yours ain't Macdonald, anyway. Do you think it respectable to keep up a ten-cent fraud like this, and keep your fellow-passengers from the proud privilege of knowing that they are ploughing the deep in company with Rudyard Kipling, eh? I found his picture in "Plain Tales from the Hills"; here it is, look at it and then call your friend Macdonald if you can.' The game was up, as modern politicians say; yet by dint of a few carefully distributed attentions Kipling managed, after all, to keep fairly quiet at sea, to land without being interviewed, and to get two whole hours of delightful obscurity in New York, with the additional pleasure of reading in that day's papers that Rudyard Kipling was dying of paralysis in Italy, and that the Rev. Charles A. Berry was breathing his last in the Channel Islands. For a

couple of 'dead 'uns' we made a fairly adequate roar at this pleasant information."*

The Rev. F. W. Macdonald, now President of the Wesleyan Conference, says of his intercourse with Berry: "The memory of his companionship during our long journey together from our leaving the Mersey to the day when we parted at San Francisco, abides amongst my happiest recollections. Many were the conversations we had about all things under the sun, and some things beyond the sun, differing sometimes, agreeing often, but all the time knitting more closely the strands of our friendship.

"In San Francisco I was taken ill, much to Berry's distress. On the morning that he was to sail for Australia, he came to my bedside, and in the tenderest manner offered to defer his voyage and remain with me. This I could not allow, and we parted affectionately, only to meet again for one or two brief interviews in England during the following years."

Berry spent a Sunday with his friends at Plymouth Church, who gave him a very cheery welcome and showed him no little kindness. It was a disappointment to them and to him that he was unable to take a part, however slight, in the public services.

He thus describes the route he took from New

* *The Young Man*, 1892.

York: "It had long been my desire to cross the great lakes of America and to see the North-West Territories of our own Empire, Winnipeg, the National Park of Canada, Vancouver, and the lovely harbours and coast scenes of the Straits of Juan de Fuca. My route was by steamer up the Hudson to Albany, thence, with suitable stoppages, to Niagara and Toronto, and so on to Owen Sound. From this point my passage lay across Lakes Huron and Superior to Fort William, where I rejoined the cars of the Canadian Pacific Railway for my long journey across the great continent. Once on the Pacific coast I was able, by easy and pleasant stages, to visit places of interest in Washington Territory, Oregon and California, and to reach San Francisco in ample time for my steamer for Sydney." He spent eight days at Banff Springs, and he wrote from there a hopeful letter to his people. For some time after leaving home he had been feeling disappointed at the slow progress he had been making towards recovery. The fine air of the Canadian prairies, and then of the Rocky Mountains, however, acted like a life-giving tonic to him, and he was beginning to feel that he would soon have perfect control of his voice and a good reserve of nervous energy in stock.

The *Monowai*, in which he sailed to Sydney, called at Honolulu, at Samoa (where, however, his stay was too short for him to make the acquaintance

of Robert Louis Stevenson, as he had hoped), and at Auckland. He spent a fortnight in Sydney, where he was the guest of Mr. Octavius Beale, and while there met the Congregational ministers of that city and district at a reception given in his honour. He had a similar pleasure while at Adelaide as the guest of Mr. G. P. Doolette.

Happily by this time his health was sufficiently restored to permit of his undertaking some little public speaking. In addition to brief speeches at the social functions just referred to, he addressed the annual meeting of the Congregational Union of South Australia held in Adelaide, and preached both in that city and in Melbourne. At the request of the Moderator, he also addressed the Presbyterian General Assembly of Victoria. In this address he referred to the changes that had come over theological thought in Great Britain. He said that his opinion was that much good had been done by what was called the new theology. That was, as regarded many of them, merely a re-statement of the great facts, verities, and truths of the Holy Gospel. Thousands of men had stated that modern criticism had taken away numberless things, but the crucial test was that it had given back the Bible to the people. By the new theology he did not mean a theology that was not a theology at all, that which was not a definite conviction; but in England they had found that, within the pro-

foundest reverence for the Bible, intelligent criticism had strengthened the spiritual life and drawn them nearer to the Bible. In the churches and congregations in the Old Land there were greater signs of the living presence of Christ than they had had for years past. There was more electric life, and the denominational significances were being lost. He could see no single reason why all the Christian churches should not unite, but he could see a thousand reasons why they should. Their objects were the same, and they were one in faith and doctrine. It seemed to him that they had less reason for denominationalism in Australia than in England, where the historical significances counted for something. He did not know whether property threw its shadow across church life in Victoria; but he knew that in England there would have been some unions if the trust deeds could be got rid of. For his part, he would burn the lot.

Berry visited Tasmania and New Zealand, and speaks of the pleasant and refreshing time he spent in these two Colonies. In the latter country he saw the principal towns, including Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Nelson, and Westport. He spent about a week visiting Mount Cook and the Lake District of Otago in company with a fellow-student, the Rev. C. H. Bradbury, who had settled in the Colony some years before. Mr. Bradbury

says: "I was struck with one thing whilst with him in New Zealand, a characteristic that you may have noted again and again in Berry. I can hardly recall a single observation about our scenery, but a thousand about our people; their condition, hopes, etc. You know we have something very choice here in the way of scenery. Berry saw some of the finest of it, and doubtless appreciated it with all his soul, but made little remark on it. But our political, commercial, and social position he seemed to grasp thoroughly. Some friends whom I invited to meet him at my house, said afterwards: 'We never saw such a man! Why, we have been in the Colony ten, fifteen, or twenty years, yet we seem to know less about it than he.'" This was a characteristic of Berry that many noted; he lived a broad, full life, and took a keen interest in many things, but he found his most engrossing interest in humanity, and in the problems relating to it.

Berry spoke many times of the great joy it had been to him to meet so many brother ministers in the Colonies, and of the splendid comradeship he had found existing among them, and into which, with so many tokens of affectionate sympathy, they had admitted him. He expressed much regret that he had been able to render so little service in return for all that so many friends had done to cheer him. He spent altogether some four months in Australia and New Zealand. Unhappily, while in Melbourne he

had a very serious relapse in health. He was seized with influenza, complicated by symptoms of rheumatic fever, and for some days his condition was serious. This retarded his recovery, and delayed his home-coming.

He arrived in England in the middle of February, 1892, after an absence from England of eight months. He resumed his ministry on the first Sunday in March, having been laid aside for eleven months.

Soon after his return, he contributed a series of "Notes and Sketches of Travel" to the pages of *The Young Man*. These papers showed that in his long journeyings he had been a shrewd and keen observer of men and manners. He had gained an insight into the problems presented by our Colonies. He had much to say, at different times, on the federation of the English-speaking peoples the world over. He foresaw that it would be long before anything in the shape of political federation could be realised, but he thought the day had already dawned when there was an essential federation of English-speaking peoples in regard to the great ideals of life, and in regard to agreement in the main ends and objects of individual and communal life.

In addressing the Guild Meeting at the Congregational Union Assembly, on the May after his return, it is touching, in the light of subsequent events, to recall his personal words to the young people:—

“ Will you let me say that I am profoundly grateful to Almighty God for sparing my life, and for restoring to me my faculties of service. That gratitude arises out of no fear of death, and out of no uncertainty as to the emancipation which lies beyond the Shadow ; but I have a growing sense of the vast and noble work which remains to be done down here for Christ and for humanity. I should like a lengthened discipline of work here as a preparation for better work hereafter. . . . Will you allow me to say, after these broken remarks, because it is in my heart to say it, that I come back from the Borderland. I stood nearer to it than I knew. God has given me back life. He has given me back, or rather, is giving me back, week by week, the power to serve Him amongst men. You will allow me, in your presence, and with the hope that it may be some example and some impulse to some of the young fellows I see here, to reconsecrate myself to Him and to humanity, and with more of simplicity, and with more of zeal—perhaps with a little more of wisdom as well—to live as long as he will let me live, and to die when I cease to be of any use ; to live for Him and for the men He came to seek and to save.”

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTIAN RE-UNION.

It was evident from nearly every speech that Berry made while abroad, and immediately after his return, as well as from the tone and spirit of his preaching and conversation, that his mind was pondering deeply on the problems presented by the present "unhappy divisions" of modern Christendom. Before he had been long in England he found himself closely identified with two kindred movements, the movement for "Christian Re-union" as represented by the Conferences at Grindelwald, and the more definite and immediately practical movement for the federation of the Free Churches.

Dr. H. S. Lunn had conceived the idea of organising holiday parties abroad whereby the enjoyments of travel might be combined with more serious pursuits. He felt that misunderstandings might be removed, points of union and possibilities of common work be discovered, and feelings of mutual respect be fostered, between representatives of different churches if they could have the opportunity of meeting and enjoying close and friendly intercourse, as well as of comparing their views and frankly discussing their differences. He

organised a winter trip to Grindelwald in January, 1892. Encouraged by the success of this experiment, the energetic promoter arranged for a series of Re-union Conferences for the following summer. He received assurances of sympathy from many leaders in both the Established and Free Churches.

Berry came into the movement at that stage almost by an accident. The Rev. J. Guinness Rogers was to have preached at Grindelwald in the month of August, but was prevented by illness, and Berry, who was judged to be in general sympathy with the movement, was invited to do so, and also to participate in the Conference. He went, as he confessed later, only half convinced as to the advisability and utility of this Congress; but as soon as he came into direct contact with the leaders of the movement, he avowed himself an enthusiastic Re-unionist. He defined his own position in a speech which followed addresses, revealing a very fine spirit, by Dr. Perowne, the Bishop of Worcester, and Père Hyacinthe (who represented the Old Catholic movement). Berry said he was not prepared to admit that denominationalism was under all circumstances an evil. He believed with Père Hyacinthe that at times the Church had been saved by its divisions. He did not wish these differences to be forgotten. Every great Church movement in history represented a baptism of the Spirit of God. For his own part, he was in no hurry for re-union.

There was something worse than disunion, and that was a hasty or artificial and unreal union. Premature schemes were often the destruction of high ideals, and he feared the Lambeth proposals were premature. Many of the bishops who made them, read meanings into them which would violate his own most cherished convictions. It was only upon the great truths of Christian life and doctrine that we should come together. If their desire was for the honour of Christ, re-union would come on right lines and at the proper time. But what were the possibilities of the hour? They must keep up the ideal of re-union, and a hatred of division for its own sake, and they must long for closer union with Christ and so with each other. They must recognise not only each other's Christianity but each other's churchmanship. They must express their divergences frankly. Re-union would come by easy stages. What could they do now? Why should not Methodists unite? And Presbyterians and Congregationalists? In disunion there was waste of resources and much overlapping.

On his return home, Berry repudiated the suggestion that from these conferences either something practical must come at once, or that nothing of importance would ever follow. "The time has not come, may not be within sight, for practical and specific schemes. The age of discussion must go before the epoch of action. The ideal of re-union

is not yet clarified, it is not familiar enough to the mass of people to be even an object of desire, and in a matter of such moment no wise or adequate action can precede an enlightened and extensive sentiment. The duty of the hour is to create, to exalt, to popularise the ideal of a re-united Christendom. Out of such an activity will immediately come a softening of asperities, and a more gracious endurance of conscientious differences. The rest will follow in due time."

Berry took part in similar conferences at Lucerne in 1893, and again at Grindelwald in 1894. During the latter he wrote, "The meetings this year have been more successful than ever—more real in sentiment and solid in effect."

About the time when the Re-union movement first took shape, Berry had a long conversation with Mr. Gladstone on Church matters. He found the venerable statesman, as ever, most keenly interested in questions of Christian doctrine, and he inquired closely into the theological changes that Berry had noted in Congregationalism and in the churches generally, and they discussed the possibilities of re-union among Protestant Christians. The aged man listened eagerly and with delighted acquiescence as the young preacher unfolded his favourite simile illustrating variety of types in essential Christian life and experience. One has heard Berry repeat more than once what he said. "I took the heavenly

city and its twelve gates, some of which were diametrically opposite to the others, as illustrating the vastness and variety of the Christian Church. I said, 'I see one grand old ivy-covered gateway, through which streams of people are pouring, and that is the Church of Rome. And another, half ornate and half very plain, is the Church of England, and another very severe and simple is the Congregational Church. The City of God has gates on every side of it—north, south, east, and west; it has three gates on each side. There is a geographical significance in that which carries a moral and a missionary significance with it. Gates looking toward the great Eastern nations, the nations of the sunrise, the nations flooded with the traditions and the beginnings of things. Gates on the west side looking towards the nations of progress and the ages of achievements. It has a north side, again, looking right up to the Polar regions, on the cold abodes of mere intellectualism. And, again, a southern side, looking down to the equator and the swarthy sons of Africa—or, metaphysically, to those great regions of emotional life in which so many of our people live. Through each gate crowds of people are hurrying to the one central spot of magnificent sunshine, in the glory of which all are bathed, and beneath the blaze of which all differences melt away for ever. Every Church provides for the intellectual capacities and tempera-

mental conditions of its members. Christ called in divergent types of character, and so prepared the way for divergent types of Church life. We now say that no Church should claim to be *the* Church, but that all should recognise themselves and each other as servants of the Kingdom of God, which stretches beyond them all.

“There was a gate on one side, without any ornamentation, that was indeed little more than a hole through the walls, but men are passing into the city through it. On another side there is a gate guarded by a High Anglican garbed as a priest, and saying, “Shut all other gates for this is the only true one”; while on another side the Pope makes precisely the same claim for the gate he guards. We who are the true Catholic Christians of England make no such exclusive claim for what is God’s gate to us. We say, “Let men come from east or west, or north or south, so long as each finds his own best way into the City of God, and the further they advance into that City the nearer will they come to each other.””

Berry did not live to see the realisation of his dreams and visions of Christian Re-union. He did not expect to see it. This generation will not witness its accomplishment. It may never come to pass. In uniting into “One Flock” under “One Shepherd” all who love Him, God may fulfil Himself in ways which have never entered into the

visions and purposes of men. There may seem to be but few tangible and permanent results surviving from these conferences. But it cannot have been wholly in vain that Christian men met to discuss devoutly the things wherein they differed and the greater things wherein they were at one. They did not build under earthly skies a Temple vast enough for them all to worship side by side within its walls, but they helped to build the Temple Unseen. Wherein they seemed to fail we can surely say, "But they did well in that it was in their hearts."

While Berry had much to say at these conferences and elsewhere, at this period, about the comprehensiveness of the Church of Christ, he did not make any surrender of conviction that might have embarrassed himself or those whom he represented. He expounded the Nonconformist position, in quarters where it was misunderstood, in a trenchant and uncompromising fashion. While he was engaged in keen debate with gifted leaders of the Anglican Church, defining his own position, and, when necessity arose, controverting theirs, this was always done with a fine tact and temper, a courtesy and fairness that won him the friendship of many who at first were no doubt disposed to look somewhat askance at the robust young Radical and Liberationist from the Midlands. He was never eager to snatch a mere

controversial victory in debate. Discussion with him was never

“The strife for triumph more than truth.”

The Rev. Frederick Relton, Vicar of St. Andrew's, Stoke Newington, bore this kindly testimony to Berry in a memorial notice in his Magazine: “His genial manner, his winning personality, his perfect fairness in debate, maintaining his own position with ardent strenuousness, while trying to understand and not to misrepresent that of those who were on the other side, won the hearts of all those who were present at those memorable gatherings, the fruit of which has yet fully to be seen. He was the life and soul, too, of the inner and more select meetings of a social character that took place after the larger ones were over for the day. There his endless fun and wit, his high spirits, his good fellowship, made him the centre of the whole thing. There are some places that will never be the same without him. Some of us may, perhaps, live to see how much he had wrought for union, and how much he had striven to bring together men of various shades of belief and Church order.”

CHAPTER X.

FREE CHURCH FEDERATION.

AT the time when the Grindelwald and Lucerne Conferences were attempting to bring closer together the Established and Free Churches of England, another movement was being started at home which was destined to have immediate and practical results. The Free Churchmen who met in Switzerland realised that while the re-union of the Churches included in British Protestantism might be little more than a dream and an ideal, the federation of the Free Churches was immediately possible. Many leading Nonconformists came together there and found themselves on the same platform, expounding and defending principles, both of faith and polity, which all held, and held with but little variation. The Churches to which they belonged could, with no surrender of conviction, come together for the defence of common rights, the removal of common disabilities, and for the promulgation of the Gospel held by all. Many informal deliberations took place between men who were prominent and influential in the different denominations. Amid the seclusion of the Swiss valleys they had leisure and opportunity for frank and full

discussion. There can be no doubt that the conversations which took place at Grindelwald between Berry, the first president of the Free Church Federation, and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, the Rev. J. Monro Gibson, D.D., and the Rev. A. Mackennal, D.D., the successive presidents, enabled them to arrive at unanimity on many points, and thus helped greatly in the maturing of the whole movement. "Every point in their plans," says Dr. Lunn, "which have resulted in the development of so remarkable a work, was thrashed out in detail between the village of Grindelwald and the surrounding glaciers."

Meanwhile there were many converging forces working at home for the same ends. So early as February, 1890, a signed article by the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, D.D., appeared in the *Methodist Times*, under the title "A Congress of Free Churches." He urged that the time had come when the true unity which undoubtedly existed between the different evangelical and Nonconformist churches of the country should be made more distinctly visible. A Church Congress for the advancement of Anglicanism met together year by year, and he asked if the Evangelical Nonconformists might not have a similar gathering. "This would be a development of a Church idea which at present is hardly realised." Such a meeting, "not for an interchange of compliments and courtesies, but for

true Christian fellowship and devotional service, and for counsel on common Christian work, would be a striking illustration of a catholic Church, including various sections, each with its own form of development, and with its distinctive features of doctrine and ritual, but all one in Christ Jesus." As the outcome of the discussion that ensued, an informal and private meeting was held at the house of Mr. Percy W. Bunting early in 1891. Berry was not present at this meeting, being abroad at the time. After careful deliberation, the proposals soon led to a tangible result. On the initiative of a conference of the leading ministers and laymen of Manchester, it was decided to hold the first Free Church Congress in that city in November, 1892. This was not a gathering of representatives elected either by churches or local councils, but a meeting open to all who were in sympathy with the movement. The success of this first congress was largely owing to the wise guidance of the Rev. Dr. Mackennal, who had been elected secretary of the Provisional Committee. A meeting was held in the Free Trade Hall, under the presidency of Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., and addresses were given by the Rev. J. Monro Gibson, the Rev. J. Clifford, D.D., and by Berry. Soon after this, Free Church Councils began to be formed in every part of the country.

A second congress was held in Leeds in 1894.

Many delegates attended, but still the congress was mainly composed of personal members. Several important decisions were made at this second congress. It was decided to elect a president for the year, instead of having a separate chairman for each meeting. The constitution was modified so as to provide mainly for representative rather than for personal membership. The Revs. Thomas Law and J. M. G. Owen were appointed organising secretaries to promote the formation of councils all over the country.

Previous to this, a plan of house-to-house visitation by all the Free Churches had been inaugurated with marked success in Bradford by Mr. Law, and many councils were inaugurated for the primary aim of undertaking this work by the formation of Free Church Parishes in all large towns. Gradually these councils, established at first for this specific purpose, widened their scope so as to include in their programme the organisation of evangelistic missions and other forms of united aggressive work.

The third congress was held in Birmingham in March, 1895. Berry was elected as first president of the Congress in the previous May. The meetings were held in Carr's Lane Chapel a week or two after the death of Dr. Dale, and there was thus a very special timeliness in the presidency of one who had been a close personal friend and neighbour of

the minister of the church in which the meetings were held. Berry in his presidential address claimed for Dr. Dale that while in later life he had felt some solicitude in reference to later developments of Free Church life, yet in his doctrine of the Church, and in his insistence upon the ethical ideas of the New Kingdom, he had done more than any man of his time to create the thought out of which these developments had naturally and necessarily sprung.

Berry in this address dealt mainly with the origin and history, the hopes and aims of the Free Church Federation movement. This was needful, inasmuch as the work was both misunderstood and misrepresented by many. Some were fearful that adhesion to it would involve disloyalty to denominational conviction, and also that it would demand compromise and reserve, if not surrender, in regard to historic associations and distinctive beliefs which were both precious and sacred. Some were suspicious lest it would commit the Churches to the views of a few extreme men. Many were not convinced of the practical utility of the movement, or judged it to be premature.

One of the most difficult points at issue was the relation of the Free Church Councils to Unitarians. In many towns the latter were working harmoniously and vigorously with the members of other Free Churches in political, educational, and philanthropic projects. Some would have made the basis of the

federation broad enough to permit of the co-operation of Unitarians. Berry took the lead in declaring this co-operation in the Free Church Councils to be both impracticable and undesirable, and he incurred some obloquy in consequence. In his Birmingham address he defined his position and that of the leaders of the Federation movement in regard to the exclusion of non-evangelical churches. "In the very forefront of our objects I would place the exaltation of Christ, the living Christ, who died and rose again, as the source and centre of our common faith and life. We come together that we may make more impressive the unity that already exists, and which does not require to be created, in our religious beliefs and spiritual experiences. That there may be differences in the perspective of our doctrinal beliefs, that there may and must be innumerable differences in the sphere of speculative thought and theoretical interpretation, that there undoubtedly is great variety of beliefs among us on points which are open to discussion and of secondary import, does not in the least affect our profound and common allegiance to the essential contents of the Christian doctrine. To us in common, Christ is the soul and centre of revealed religion. His essential deity, His real incarnation, His sacrificial and redemptive work, the vital relation of the Cross to the remission of sins—these are held by us all as facts of history and truths of revelation. It is to

give due weight and influence to this common faith ; it is to put an end, so far as we can, to the mischievous suspicion of a divided faith that we have come into this larger and closer association. This frank declaration of our position is our answer to critics who attack us from opposite poles. On one hand we have been charged, or suspected if not charged, with a lack of brotherhood and breadth in not inviting Unitarians to join our ranks. Our Unitarian friends will believe me when I say that our attitude has been determined as much out of respect for their conscientious convictions as out of loyalty to our own. We are not their critics, and still less their judges. We are not slow to pay homage to the learning and devotion, to the intellectual and public service, which are associated with their great names. We even recognise with pleasure and gratitude the work in which they have fulfilled so prominent a part—the work of reclaiming the more human aspects of Christ's life and the more humane features of His Gospel. But we cannot hide from ourselves the fact that the point on which we differ is one of such vital importance, involving the whole personality and mission of Jesus Christ, and necessarily carrying with it such difference of spiritual experience, as to render union a matter of practical impossibility. This is not a Nonconformist Congress whose *raison d'être* lies in a negative and critical attitude towards the Established Church,

This is a Free Church Congress, based upon our common and positive adhesion to the great verities of Evangelical history. The definition of such an association necessitates absolute unity in the essentials of our faith as a primary requirement of fellowship."

In one of his speeches, Berry said that their action had been determined quite as much out of respect for the convictions of their Unitarian friends as their own. "I remember speaking to a Unitarian minister in this country, and in reply to his question why I had not asked him to join our movement I explained the reason. His reply I shall always remember. 'I am sorry,' he said, 'for I find among the Evangelicals a tone and atmosphere that I love. But I am also glad, for if you had asked my co-operation I should have thought you a bit of a hypocrite.'"

At the Birmingham Congress the work of federation took more practical and definite shape than had been possible before. Messrs. Richard and George Cadbury promised munificent donations, and the Rev. Thomas Law was appointed secretary, with Mr. James Rutherford as assistant-secretary. About seventy councils sent delegates to this congress, while nearly one hundred and fifty were in existence but as yet unrepresented. Berry did much in drafting the constitution, and it was at his suggestion that the assembly ceased to become the Congress for which

Dr. Rogers had pleaded, and became the National Council.

The work of federation in his own district was sedulously fostered by Berry. He was for two years the president of the West Midland Federation of Evangelical Free Churches, which included the councils in the three counties around Birmingham. Mr. and Mrs. George Cadbury entertained about 600 ministers and delegates at their residence at Northfield for a "Day of Consecration," and those who were present speak of Berry's address on "The Relation of the Holy Spirit to the Work of our Churches" as one of the most powerful, heart-searching appeals for personal holiness that they had ever heard.

The Birmingham Congress was followed by an energetic campaign throughout the country. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and Berry, accompanied by the Rev. Thomas Law, organising secretary of the National Council, undertook to address a series of meetings throughout the country for the exposition of the Federation movement, and to commend its claims to the sympathy and confidence of Free Churchmen. Mr. Hughes and Berry first met at Grindelwald. They spent altogether nearly five months in each other's company there, and during these months discussed every phase of the Free Church Federation movement. Mr. Hughes says that to Berry, more than to any other man, we owe

that note of true, positive, scriptural catholicity which is the distinguishing characteristic of the Free Church Council movement, and which has been so strikingly illustrated in the Free Church Catechism. He it was who, first in private conversation and afterwards in many a crowded hall, taught that we must no longer be satisfied with such titles as Protestant, Nonconformist, Dissenter, but that we must transmute them into their positive equivalents. "These convictions," says Mr. Hughes, "had been floating more or less in my own mind before I met Dr. Berry; but I owe it to him that they have since become so explicit, pronounced, and clearly realised. Like the Evangelicals of the past generation, I was at first mainly preoccupied with a purely individualistic aspect of truth. I did not sufficiently realise the collectivist teaching of the New Testament, and the essentially social character of Christianity. I avoided the doctrines of the Church, the sacraments, and the ministry. But in intercourse with Dr. Berry, I clearly realised that the only antidote to Anglican schism and Roman heresy is the reassertion of the great cardinal doctrines of the Christian Church, the Christian sacraments, and the Christian ministry. I well remember how electrified and overwhelmed were some intelligent and devout High Anglicans when, in personal conversation with Dr. Berry, they discovered that his faith was as positive and much more reasonable

than their own. Expecting an easy victory over a mere destructive critic and narrow individualist, they were silenced by positive statements of catholic truth which gave much more rational and attractive significance to their own favourite phrases."

The meetings addressed by Mr. Hughes and Berry proved to be a great stimulus to the work of federation. They secured the adhesion of individual churches, and quickened the enthusiasm of local leaders. They had another important result. Tens of thousands of Nonconformists had never till then had the affirmations of Nonconformity brought home to them. The possibilities of Nonconformist Churchmanship had not been realised. Many have testified that until they heard Berry's vigorous and lucid vindication of their rights they had looked upon their dissent as stamping them with something of social and ecclesiastical inferiority, but that they came away from these meetings holding their heads higher than they had held them before, and with an exalted sense of the responsibilities and possibilities that their convictions involved.

This work made great demands on Berry's strength. After a long railway journey he had to preach or take part in a conference in the afternoon, and to speak for an hour at a demonstration, which invariably crowded the largest building in the town. In Berry's case, unhappily, the drain on his strength seldom ceased with the close of the public gather-

ings. Friends were generally invited to meet him afterwards; he was launched into discussions into which he threw himself with all his intensity, and these were frequently prolonged until unwisely late hours. Successive days brought a repetition of this programme, and on Saturday he would reach home to face the accumulated work which his absence had brought, in addition to his preparation for his Sunday's work in his own church. Incredible though it will seem to those who did not know him, I can testify, as can many others who were in the best position to judge, that he never preached finer sermons, and never preached with more vigour and effect, than on these Sabbaths which followed weeks of labour which would have worn out most men. But the cost of all this, though not evident at the time, has been brought home to us all now.

It is easy for us to say that he ought to have spared himself and worked with more prudence. But with his temperament the methodical and sedulous self-care shown by some men was an impossibility to him. He found great delight in these herculean labours. The atmosphere into which they threw him was one in which he revelled, even though it might not conduce to either physical or intellectual well-being. The persuasions and appeals of friends were smilingly but resolutely brushed on one side, and the insatiable demands made on his strength were never refused where

acceptance was possible, even though he well knew the risks he ran.

Berry made some very distinct contributions to the Federation movement. Allusion has been made to the emphasis he laid on the positive and constructive side of Nonconformity. He also never failed to expound in these meetings his doctrine of the Christian Church as a divinely-ordained institution. This doctrine had been consciously shaping itself in his own mind, in regard mainly to the Congregational aspects of church life, long before the Grindelwald Conference. He told me one morning, in 1887, I think, that he had been spending the previous day with Dale, and they had been discussing together the question of Christ's specific presence in the Church as a Church. He said that Dale was formulating a doctrine that had been in his mind for years, and he recalled public utterances of his own that had given tentative expression to his growing convictions. He said: "We shall all have to come round to this belief I am feeling more and more, if we are to get firm foothold and make our distinctive message growingly effective. Congregationalists have not made enough of the Church, have not realised clearly how much the Church as a Church can be and can do." Berry's own people well recall how early in his ministry he was giving expression, in the Church Meeting and at the Communion Table,

to those views of the nature and prerogatives of the Christian Church that filled so large a place in his later utterances.

But in connection with the Federation movement, Berry set himself to show that, rightly understood, this doctrine of the Church was not a distinctive feature of Congregational polity, but was an essential factor in that of every Free Evangelical Church. He said: "I have been convinced for years that the salvation of these churches lies in the salvation of the church meeting in Congregational and Baptist Churches, and in the revival and, if necessary, the reconstruction of the Society Meeting in Methodist Churches."

Early in 1896 Berry pleaded for a Free Church Catechism of ecclesiastical as well as doctrinal truth, which should set forth their positive and constructive views. He took part in some of the preliminary work relating to the issue of this Catechism, but was compelled to relinquish it on account of failing health.

The work of promoting Christian unity had its reflex effect on Berry himself. It compelled him to emphasise certain aspects of truth and polity. At Grindelwald, as we have seen, he asserted his ecclesiastical position as being more than a protest and a dissent. "I am a Churchman, I am a High Churchman, I am a Catholic Churchman," he was fond of saying. His friends would note that, as if

to confirm this claim, he began to pay more attention, at any rate in his public appearances, to clerical attire, as who would say, "Are you a clergyman? Then I more." During later years he wore his doctor's gown and hood when preaching in his own church. But he always regarded these as non-essentials, and had a hearty contempt for all signs of official clericalism. Once while staying at the country house of Mr. J. J. Colman, M.P., a genial and witty dignitary of the Anglican Church was also a member of the house-party. One morning after breakfast, the Dean and the Nonconformist minister were strolling through the gardens together. The Dean wore his clerical gaiters, while Berry was in a knickerbocker suit, which set off admirably his well-proportioned limbs. The Dean remarked, "I say, Doctor, what a pity those fine calves of yours are wasted in a Nonconformist church." "Well, yes," said Berry, with a twinkle in his eye, "I was thinking something of that myself; but then, you see, Nonconformists think more of the other extremity."

Berry's work in the Free Church Councils led him to emphasise even more than before the evangelical elements in his own creed. At Grindelwald the churchmen with whom he associated belonged almost exclusively to the evangelical school of the English Church. In his work at home he was thrown into close association with those who held

the evangelical creed even more rigorously than did his own church. In his public addresses he had necessarily to take ground that was common to all the churches who had joined the Federation. As we have seen, he was led early in his ministerial life to espouse heartily a broad evangelicalism as the most credible and effective presentation of Christianity. This secured him an acceptance and an influence that he could not have gained so fully and so readily at that stage had there been any doubt as to his general loyalty to the evangelical faith. If the confidence and the adherence of the churches, as a whole, were to be won, they must be assured that the leaders of the new movement were at one with them in what they regarded as essential verities. And yet, while Berry satisfied these conditions, those who heard him were conscious that he was honestly sympathetic towards all true theological progress. He was, perhaps unconsciously to themselves, preparing the minds of his hearers for inevitable change and growth under the guidance of the Eternal Spirit, for tolerance towards new settings of old truths, for the gain that came from reverent and sober criticism and the proved results of science, and was reassuring the theologically timid and pessimistic. He was also helping the churches to realise that new days brought new and larger duties, that the churches had obligations to outsiders which must

be loyally fulfilled, and that they must venture into new fields and adopt larger programmes if they would be loyal to the commands of the Master and meet the needs of the age.

Berry saw that no religious movement of this century was so iull of promise and of potency as this federation of the Free Churches. He saw and prophesied that if it be wisely and continuously directed towards practical ends, it will, when consolidated and matured, give a power to these Churches which they have never had before. His constant message was that this Federation movement must vindicate itself by practical results, and sustain itself by present vision. "If we have not the realised presence of Christ," he once said at a Communion service, "nothing can bring us together; if we have it, nothing can keep us apart." He was convinced that along with this spiritual vision, because of this spiritual vision, the policy of the Free Churches must be a policy of work. On the grounds of scholarship and argument the case was theirs, and the battle of their principles had been won. Now the contest was to be in the arena of work. They must cease talking about the greatness and importance of their movement, and must devote themselves to making it important. But they must see to it that they were never cut off from their spiritual base. "I would bid you, morning and night and noontide, to get fresh visions of your vocation

and its possibilities. It is so easy in the ruts of commonplace duty and the routine of daily task to lose the imaginative, the ideal, the transcendental view of one's place and work. To my thinking, the poet who sees is the most practical toiler who works, and if we are to labour to any effect we must be ever having, as by the gift of spiritual poetry, power to see the unseen, to appreciate the vastness of the Kingdom for which we are striving, and the glory and the certainty of the end to which our Lord is leading us."

CHAPTER XI.

LATER LABOURS AND HONOURS.

"I USED to think I had some chance of distinction as one of the few men who had never written a book. I greatly fear I have no chance of distinction among those who have." This was Berry's modest estimate of his own literary aptitudes and prospects, as given in the preface to the first volume which bore his name. He was over forty before this was issued, and, indeed, he was wont to assert that no preacher should venture upon publication until he had reached that age. He knew that he was more facile and potent as a speaker than as a writer. With few exceptions, all that he published had first been spoken. Had he been spared to reach the maturity of his powers, he would doubtless have given to the world books more massive and masterly than any he had published. Shortly before his final breakdown in health, he had completed arrangements with the publishers of the present volume for the issue of a collection of sermons, to bear the title of "The Victorious Victim," but this was one of his many unfulfilled projects.

His first volume, "Vision and Duty," was pub-

lished by Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston & Co., in "The Preachers of the Age" Series, in 1893. Notwithstanding the author's diffident prediction in his preface, he had every reason to be gratified by the reception accorded to his first literary venture. The reviews, in all sections of the Press, bore testimony to the virility and freshness, the spiritual insight and power, revealed in the twelve sermons contained in the work. Berry claimed for them that they were "an earnest man's effort to make the Gospel more credible and potent in his own generation."

In 1897 Messrs. James Clarke & Co. published a second volume, in their series "Small Books on Great Subjects," under the title "Mischievous Goodness and Other Papers." The ten studies included in the volume are based on sermons preached to his own people.

These are the only works that bear his name, but he wrote in addition a considerable number of articles in the religious Press, notably in the *Christian World* and in the *Young Man*. When Mr. F. A. Atkins, the editor of the latter paper, brought out the *New Age* in 1894, he secured Berry's services as writer of the front-page leaderettes, under the heading "The Outlook." This Berry did until the editorship was assumed by Mr. A. E. Fletcher, on his retirement from the *Daily Chronicle*. In the opinion of many, Berry never

did better work with his pen than in these articles, dealing with current events—political, ecclesiastical, social, and literary. They revealed a sure journalistic instinct, promptness and sagacity of judgment, and a wide knowledge of affairs. They were written in the rush of his busiest years, and also when his health was precarious; and yet his editor testifies that he never had a more reliable contributor, and that his copy was never late.

In the *Young Man* for January, 1895, he published a character sketch of the Right Hon. John Morley, M.P. He had a very warm esteem and admiration for Mr. Morley, and in an article of marked ability and discernment he dealt with the characteristics of this gifted statesman and *littérateur* with sympathetic and cordial appreciation, and yet with frankness and discrimination. His references to the delicate question of Mr. Morley's attitude toward the Christian religion were marked by conspicuous fairness and breadth of view. He said:—

“Much has been written and said of Mr. Morley's attitude towards religion. I will not attempt to hide my regret that a man so exalted and reverent feels himself unable to accept the terms of the Christian Gospel. But neither will I allow a dogmatic orthodoxy to blind me to the true religiousness of Mr. Morley's spirit. The attempt of the Newcastle Tories to brand him as an atheist,

and to picture him as a man who glories in affronting his Maker and in treading ruthlessly on the holiest sentiments of his fellows, was a piece of as blasphemous literature as ever was published. His attitude is perhaps best described in his own declaration that 'a man may disbelieve religiously as certainly as he may religiously believe.' More than once he has emphatically asserted his belief that religion is essential to man, and that worship is the highest exercise of man's mind and heart. He is neither Antagonist nor Indifferentist in this matter. And though frankly unable to accept our beliefs, he is never so happy as when identifying himself with the spirit that lies behind them.

"The Countess of Aberdeen once gave me a beautiful instance of Mr. Morley's fine and reverent spirit. When staying with them at the Viceregal Lodge in Dublin, the Countess, with her charming consideration for other people's convictions, told Mr. Morley that he need not come down to family prayers, as she understood such exercise might not be in harmony with his sentiments. Mr. Morley's reply revealed at once the splendour and humility of his character. He said he would certainly come down, if only to renew his own sense of littleness amid the mysteries of life, and to begin the day with a feeling of fellowship in service with the humblest member of the household. A similar

testimony comes to me from Scotland. A friend of mine who was staying with him in the Highlands in company with Mr. Fowler (now Sir H. Fowler) and a goodly number of notabilities, said that the pleasantest hours of that very pleasant visit were the Sunday evening hours, when the company gathered around the piano and spent the time in singing hymns. It may surprise some people to learn that among those who joined most heartily and reverently in the exercise was Mr. John Morley. Perhaps some day his spirit of piety will find a body for itself in a credible statement of the Christian message."

In June, 1892, Berry received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Iowa College, Grinnell, Iowa, U.S.A. This is one of the most influential of the theological colleges in America, and its degree is held in high estimation. It has always exercised the most scrupulous vigilance in the conferment of its honorary degree, only three ministers on this side the Atlantic having received this distinction — the Rev. Thomas Davies, of Llanelly, the Rev. R. W. McAll, of Paris, and Berry — and all the three have now passed away. During the International Congregational Council held in London in 1891 Berry was travelling round the world, and his absence from this memorable gathering was greatly deplored. His pulpit was occupied for six consecutive Sundays by dis-

tinguished preachers from America, who were delegates to the council—the Revs. Amory H. Bradford, D.D., Washington Gladden, D.D., President W. F. Slocum, D.D., of Colorado Springs, F. A. Noble, D.D., of Chicago, W. E. Griffis, D.D., of Boston, and President G. A. Gates, of Iowa College. Their visits to Wolverhampton created great interest and attracted crowded congregations. Some of these ministers were on the Council of Iowa College, and one its president, and coming into touch with the great influence that Berry was wielding, not only in the Midlands but in England generally, and mindful also of the interesting link between him and American Congregationalism, they recognised the appropriateness of the conferment of this honour on the English pastor. The College, in the words of its president, “felt itself honoured in being permitted to confer its degree on so able a man, and on one who stands so high, not only in his own country, but in world-wide Congregationalism.”

In February, 1895, the Senate of the ancient University of St. Andrews decided to confer a similar degree on Berry, and in the following month he left Birmingham before the close of the Free Church Congress, over which he was presiding, in order to receive this honour.

Berry was an enthusiast for Foreign Missions.
In his many missionary sermons and addresses he

rendered distinct service by exposition and defence. Few could deal so trenchantly and vigorously with cavilling objections as to their utility, or kindle in an audience such an enthusiasm and cheery optimism. His was one of the four signatures attached to a pamphlet issued in 1891, bearing the title "Congregationalism and the Evangelisation of the World," which directly originated the "Forward Movement" of the London Missionary Society. He was for many years a director of the Society, and his influence on the Board always told on the side of a policy of boldness, large-heartedness, and progress.

He was deeply interested in all movements which related to young people. In 1893 he filled the office of President of the National Council of Young People's Guilds. When the Guild movement was launched the young people of his own congregation established one of the first, and this became one of the largest and most successful in the country. He took great delight and pride in the good work it sought to do, and in the efforts of its members to render serious and strenuous service. One of the last engagements he fulfilled was to give an address at the New Year's Consecration Meeting in connection with the Christian Endeavour Society in his own church.

He was, during the whole term of his pastorate at Queen Street, one of the directors of the Tetten-

hall College. Most of the boys walked into town to attend the morning service at Queen Street. His relations with the past and present headmaster, with the staff, and with the boys were of the most cordial and affectionate character. When he got among the lads—as he loved to do whenever opportunity offered, in their studies or on the cricket field, or at the Speech Day—their delight was boundless, and was only equalled by his own. Scores of “Old Boys” recall with gratitude the influence for good exerted over them in their most impressionable and critical years alike by Berry’s manly preaching and magnetic personality.

CHAPTER XII.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHMANSHIP.

BERRY received the crowning proof of the affection and confidence of his brethren when, in May, 1896, he was elected Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. On assuming that office at the beginning of the following year, he was, with the exception of Dr. Dale, the youngest man who had received that distinction. It was felt on all hands that by his brilliant and self-sacrificing labours in many fields he had well earned that early honour, the highest that English Congregationalism can bestow. His election was manifestly a popular one, and his addresses were anticipated with much eagerness. He was felt to be the man for the hour.

He realised that his chairmanship came "at a critical moment in the history of Evangelical religion." At home the air was thick with impending controversies, notably in reference to reactionary educational measures and the revival of sacerdotalism, while abroad ominous clouds were rolling up from distant horizons. Within the churches great questions were coming up for discussion, and important movements were on their

trial. Berry's solicitude to be a worthy and helpful spokesman for his brethren made his office to him not merely a gratifying distinction, but a position involving grave responsibility.

The moment was a critical one for himself. He had been closely identified with movements for securing the federation of the Free Evangelical Churches and for promoting Christian re-union. He had now to prove to his own denomination that in these labours he had neither surrendered nor compromised a single distinctive conviction which he held as a Congregationalist. He had to give them assurance that his pleas for catholicity had not lessened his attachment to his own church. He had always maintained that each church could promote federation only while being "true to its own traditions, zealous for its own methods, and careful for its particular type of piety. The church that is truest to itself has most and best to communicate to others."

Berry's theme for his May address was "Congregational Churchmanship: its Principles, its Privileges, its Obligations." It was in many respects a crystallisation of convictions that had been floating in solution in most of his public utterances on ecclesiastical matters for some years. He pleaded, as he had so often pleaded, for the recognition among all Christian believers of each other's Christianity and of each other's church-

manship. "The church that fosters saints and rears prophets must be from God. The blessed facts of Christian history, the saved and gracious souls in all the churches, give happy despatch to a narrow ecclesiasticism and restore the only possible groundwork for Christian unity. The conclusion which is here reached does not imply that one church is as good as another, or that it is immaterial with which church a Christian man allies himself, or that a man may change from one church to another without effect upon his Christian character. All that it means is, that into every church where faith is found and piety is cultured the Master comes with grace and benediction."

Berry then proceeded to define and expound his churchmanship. "Personal salvation is essential to churchmanship, not churchmanship to personal salvation. Congregationalists are churchmen, as opposed to individualists. We are living members of an organism, not loose atoms wandering in eternal isolation. Some Christian people affect indifference to this aspect of our Congregational principles, and do so either out of impatient zeal for missionary evangelism, or from avowed hostility to even the simplest form of disciplinary association. Churchmanship is the natural, the protective, the educational, concomitant of discipleship. We affirm the Divine origin, the spiritual endowment, the

organic efficiency, of the Christian Church. When meeting with Christ in communion with fellow-believers we receive gifts, and rise to the possession of powers not possible to single and separate saints. We then become a church, endowed with the presence and unction of the Holy Ghost, charged with the stewardship of the Gospel, entrusted with the sacred heritage of the Christian sacraments—not self-governing, as some are wont to say, but graciously controlled and guided by the presence of Christ in the midst, and called to mutual oversight and edification in the Lord. . . . A Congregational Church is not a club, in which membership depends upon pew-rents. Neither is it a theological society, the purpose of whose existence is to discuss speculative questions and to attempt the settlement of a philosophy of religion. It is more even than an association of admirable people, met for the promotion of ethical culture and philanthropic enterprise. Clubs and societies are makeable and manageable by men. Churches are the creation and instrument of the Holy Ghost. Christ in the heart of each, Christ in the midst of all is the spiritual factor which translates a mere human association into a Christian Church."

His doctrine of the sacraments seemed to him to follow inevitably from this doctrine of the church. Congregationalism "believes in baptism as the beautiful sign of Christ's universal Saviour-

hood, and of His claim upon those whom He bought with His blood. It believes in the Eucharist as a social festival of thanksgiving for the merits and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, as a perpetual remembrance and proclamation of redeeming love, and as a means of specially close and gracious communion with the Christ whose Real Presence gives to it its true significance. Not as a commemorative rite merely, but as a communicative channel, do we preserve and fulfil this sacred service. But we repudiate the doctrine of carnalised elements. We reject the claim that in order to a valid sacrament there is necessity for official presence and dispensation. This beautiful and holy service was Christ's gift to His people, and we, at least, as belonging to Him, will never surrender our claim to it. He alone is necessary to its sanctity and significance."

Berry did not elucidate what he implied by the statement that the Eucharist is a "communicative channel," but in one of his public addresses given in 1895 he said: "I do not believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemorative feast merely, but I believe that it is a communion of the body and the blood of the Lord, and that in the sacramental act of taking the bread and the cup—for the sacrament lies in the act and not in the symbol, that act of faith, obedience, and love—the recipient takes to himself the body and

blood of his Lord, and is strengthened and imbued thereby."

This is briefly what Berry meant by Congregational Churchmanship and what he implied by calling himself a High Churchman. Many of his closest friends joined issue with him on some of the points he raised. He carried the whole Assembly with him, however, with great enthusiasm, as with incisive power and sustained eloquence he showed the bearing of his doctrine upon the life and work of the churches, and especially pleaded for a fuller attempt to realise the ideal of the church meeting and all its manifold possibilities of fellowship and service.

Had Berry but been spared to us, we say wistfully, spared to grow in vision and conviction, as he was growing to the last, so as to mature and clarify and verify his own faith on these great matters, to set these convictions in due perspective and correlation, what might he not have achieved for us that would have made the Church of the twentieth century the better equipped to accomplish the tasks which we know await the people of Christ? He could interpret the pathetic voices of its need, he had broadening conceptions of the splendour of its possibilities, and he saw that only in the realisation of the presence of the Living Christ in all the churches that bear His name, could that need be met and those possibilities be achieved.

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The Autumnal Assembly over which Berry presided was held in Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham. When Dr. Dale was Chairman of the Union in 1869, his address was given in Queen Street Chapel, Wolverhampton. The coincidence was a very happy one. Berry's address at this Assembly, on "The Churches of Christ and the Kingdom of God," was to some extent complementary of that which he delivered in May. Those who heard it aver that they seldom heard more noble and effective oratory. He was far from well at the time, but when once launched on his subject no trace of weakness was manifest.

In dealing with the problems of the day he urged that our first duty was to clarify and impress upon Christendom the vital distinction between the Churches of Christ and the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is God's new earth, waiting to be realised down here. It is God's new heaven, soon to complete itself around the throne. We must teach men to reverence the Church not for the claims she makes but for the work she does. This point was enforced by a characteristic illustration. Passing a Lancashire cotton mill he was startled to see pieces of machinery thrown out of the upper windows and falling in fragments in the yard beneath. A better type of product had come into the market. These discarded machines, though in good order and

nearly new, could not make it. "And you see, sir, this mill doesn't run for the sake of its machinery; it runs to make the best cotton on the market; it's the best cotton we want and must have, so we are clearing the mill for machinery that can make it." "I do not believe," said Berry, "that a complete college faculty could have taught me half so much in twice the time I spent at that mill. The thing to be produced, that is the determining factor."

Berry took the opportunity of making "somewhat clearer a movement in which some of us are deeply engaged. There has been much talk of late concerning High Church Congregationalism. It is not unknown to you that the present speaker has claimed the title of High Churchman. I am so far an enthusiast in this matter that I sincerely rejoice in abundant evidences of the fact that this claim, so far from being a singular and perhaps pardonable eccentricity, is now largely affirmed and defended by our people. But what does it mean? I think I may venture to believe, after the argument to which I have invited your attention, that no one will suspect it of the least taint of sacerdotalism. It is the affirmation of the Church, of the Church's privileges, powers, and duties, as against the individualist on the one hand, who thinks he can complete his spiritual culture and fulfil his duty to Christ and humanity without

coming into associated fellowship, and on the other hand as against the priests, who have arrogated to themselves the functions and even the very name of the Church, and have insinuated themselves into dominion where they were under debt of service. But this affirmation of the Church as a Christ-ordained and Christ-equipped society, while it operates for the correction of these two dangerous errors, is inspired by considerations and emphasised for reasons much deeper than these. At the heart of it this revived enthusiasm for the Church is an attempt to recover the Church's spirituality, to save it from the blight of Erastianism whether explicit or implied, to differentiate it from the world in which and for which it is called to labour, and to cleanse it, and clothe it with fresh fitness for its Divine enterprise. Such a movement, so far from repeating the old blunder of making the Church a fetish, to be revered for its own sake and in a spirit approaching to idolatry, is an effort to restore to the Church its instrumental efficiency as an agent for the world's redemption."

On the day following the delivery of this address, Berry took part in the unveiling of a statue of Dr. Dale in the Corporation Art Gallery in Birmingham. His speech, in its lofty tone and subdued passion, was one of the most telling and, in its occasion, one of the most touching that he

ever delivered. It has pathetic associations, not only as his tribute to a friend and comrade he dearly loved, but also from its being almost his last utterance at any public function as Chairman of the Union. A writer in the *Independent* said at the time: "He lifted the occasion to the height of greatness by the ease and passion with which he spoke. I have read a good report of the proceedings, but it conveys little of the thrill with which his words fell on the listening throng, and of the deep response with which they were met."

In this speech Berry referred to speeches just given, in which he fancied it was implied that between the theologian and the preacher there was some gulf that needed to be crossed, and that the man who occupied a place of eloquence and power in the pulpit had need of some modification before he could become a man of affairs. "It is one of the glories," he said, "one of the distinctive principles we endeavour to inculcate, that theology, the queen of sciences, includes all the sciences of which she is queen, and that a preacher is scarce a preacher at all who has so much to say of worlds invisible as to fail in the application of his truths to the world visible and actual. The higher a man rises the further he sees, and it was because Dr. Dale climbed those heights of faith which gave him vision of the invisible and eternal, that he was able to see all the trends of earthly

movements and all the meanings and significances of earthly affairs. It was because he was supreme as theologian and preacher that he became one of the foremost in the municipal ranks of a city rich in foremost men, in the teaching and realisation of true civic righteousness. He is not the best man for the world who is only a man of the world. He does most for his city and his time who belongs to the City Eternal, and to that eternity which stretches over time. Dr. Dale is our example, and although we are poor copyists, we are doing our best, and are grateful that in this Midland city Dr. Dale has taught us how to link two worlds, and, because we believe in the world that is to be, to strive to make the world that is, the best possible.

"It is sometimes thought by those superior persons who never come into contact with anything so earthly as manufactures, that a manufacturing city must of necessity be a mean city, a city so excited and busy in its grovelling after wealth as to have no knowledge of the higher and wider universe of religion and literature and art. Let them come to Birmingham and they get their answer. Perhaps, for the present at least, strongest and sweetest in the note of Birmingham's answer was the honour that the citizens were doing to a man who lived, as to his inner, creative, and determinative life, up in the high places, and

who in Birmingham, a city of manufactures, got swift recognition as a man who had something to say to men who were busy earning their daily bread, and facing the hard and actual problems of to-day. In honouring this man you are honouring those forces which are making for the highest and best life of the nation. My brethren and I will, if it be permitted us, often come into this hall to look at this statue. In life Dr. Dale was to some of us an artesian well of inspiration. I knew him well; I loved him deeply. This Midland world, with all its stir and bustle, is not quite the same to me since he went out of it, but his memory is an example."

On the following morning Berry said to a friend connected with the Press: "I was glad to have that opportunity of speaking out about Dale. To think of ignoring the spiritual side of the man!"

The thought will come to many, "Was not this that the speaker said of his friend true also of himself? Was not Berry's influence in Wolverhampton potent, hallowing, elevating like that of his illustrious neighbour? In depicting his friend's character and influence, was he not also, quite unconsciously, one is sure, setting forth his own ideal and ambition for his life and service in his own city?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MISSION TO AMERICA.

EARLY in 1897 Berry received a very cordial and pressing invitation to take part in the services to be held in the following November in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, to celebrate the semi-centennial of the founding of that church, and to render loving honour to the memory and work of Henry Ward Beecher, who, at the time of his death in 1887, had been its pastor for forty years. After consulting his people and receiving their hearty approval, Berry accepted the invitation to renew the ties between himself and a church which for many years he had regarded with great affection.

Two years before very interesting and timely greetings had been exchanged by the American and English churches. In December, 1895, during the negotiations between the two countries on the Venezuelan boundary dispute, and on the Sunday morning following the publication of a somewhat alarming and menacing message from President Cleveland, Berry preached a powerful sermon, denouncing the attempts made by many on both sides of the Atlantic to plunge the two countries into the terrible iniquity and disaster of a war.

"Such an issue," he said, "will never be precipitated if only the Christian churches of the two nations will immediately and emphatically pronounce against it." It has been suggested to me that, as Queen Street Church and pastor have been very closely associated with perhaps the most famous and influential of American churches, the church associated with the name of Henry Ward Beecher, it would be well for us to forward a telegram to Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, expressive of goodwill, and of prayers for the continuance of peace." He then called upon the congregation to signify their wishes in the matter by rising, when, amid a scene of great impressiveness, all present stood up, and thus signified their assent to the following telegram being sent in their name: "Abbott, Plymouth Church, Brooklyn.—Queen Street Church, Wolverhampton, sends greetings, and prays for perfect peace between England and America.—Berry."

On that evening Dr. Lyman Abbott, pastor of Plymouth Church, was preaching on the crisis to a crowded and influential congregation, including many of the foremost citizens of New York. At the close of an eloquent plea for peace, he said: "A few years ago you called an Englishman to your pulpit, and I have received from that man this message." He read the message amid breathless silence, and then there burst out such a mighty volume of

applause as one only hears on great occasions. Men and women wept. Dr. Abbott called on the whole congregation to signify its will that a responsive message should be sent over instantly. Everyone in the vast throng sprang to his feet, and amid indescribable enthusiasm the following was adopted and forwarded: "The great congregation of Plymouth Church, by unanimous rising vote, returns greetings. We join in prayers for peace with kin beyond sea.—Abbott."

As soon as it became known that Berry was to visit America, the friends of international arbitration in this country approached him with the view of securing his assistance in the States on behalf of this object. It was anticipated that a fresh Treaty would be introduced to Congress at the opening session in the beginning of December, and it was felt that if Berry could be present and preach in Washington at this time he might do much toward the settlement of the question.

The relations between Free Churchmen in England and their brethren in the United States have always been cordial and intimate. In the great crisis of the American Civil War, when most of the upper classes in this country sided with the South and with slavery, the Free Churches and the working classes here made a resolute stand for the North and for freedom. This service was warmly recognised by our American cousins,

and made the bond of union between us closer and more precious. Moreover, the Free Churches of England have constantly supported a pacific foreign policy. Henry Richard, who had been a Congregational minister, and who, in his later years, was elected to the chair of the Congregational Union, was for many years the secretary and the leading spirit in the Peace Society. He saw from the first that the campaign had to become international, and, in conjunction with Richard Cobden and others, he organised international peace congresses fifty years ago. The accession of Louis Napoleon to power in France, followed as it was by the Crimean War and by other untoward events, rudely blasted the hopes of the advocates of peace; but at the first favourable opportunity Henry Richard renewed his international efforts in Europe and continued them till his death.

With the object of securing the active co-operation of the working classes in this country in favour of peace at the time of the Franco-German War, Henry Richard called into existence the Workmen's Peace Association, which in course of time changed its name to the International Arbitration League. The secretary of this Society was Mr. W. R. Cremer, who a few years after secured a seat in Parliament. While the League laboured to influence the working classes in favour of a policy of peace at home, it sought to promote

its objects abroad by establishing an annual conference of members of European parliaments who were in favour of peace and arbitration, and by promoting a permanent Treaty of Arbitration between Great Britain and the United States. Ten years ago the first Inter-Parliamentary Peace Conference met in Paris, and it has continued to meet at various European capitals. It was even said that the report of a Russian official of the conference held at Buda-Pesth was read by the Czar, and impelled him to convene the recent Conference at The Hague. In following the second line of international propaganda, Mr. Cremer not only secured the adoption by the House of Commons of a resolution in favour of a permanent system of arbitration between Great Britain and the United States, but twice obtained the signatures of a very large number of members of Parliament to memorials to the President and Congress of the United States in favour of the project. On both occasions he and others visited Washington with the object of backing up the memorial. Unexpected difficulties presented themselves, into which it is unnecessary here to enter. Suffice it to say that, to those who were most intimate with the situation, it appeared necessary that the Christian sentiment of the United States should be actively enlisted. The overwhelming majority of Christians in the United States are outside the Episcopal Church; therefore it was

desirable that English Free Churchmen should voice the appeal. At first the idea was entertained that two or three men should be sent, whose names would suffice to command public attention in the United States. Such men are few, and have engagements months ahead. Ultimately the hopes of the friends of International Arbitration centred solely upon Berry, who was already pledged to a visit to the United States.

Mr. Cremer went down to Wolverhampton and saw Berry, who warmly entertained the idea; but there was a serious difficulty in the way, inasmuch as his engagements in America were early in the autumn, and the Congress would not meet until December. The importance of this unofficial international mission was pressed upon Berry, but he urged that his church at Wolverhampton had so freely given him up to outside public work, as President of the Free Church Congress, and as Chairman of the Congregational Union, that he felt that he could not further trespass upon their indulgence. Accordingly the suggestion was made that a requisition from a few distinguished friends of the movement should be signed and forwarded to the deacons of the church at Wolverhampton. Mr. Howard Evans, the treasurer of the International Arbitration League, drew up the requisition, and obtained the signatures of some of the leading men in the Congregational body, and thus

all obstacles were removed. It only remains to be said that Berry, knowing how small were the funds of the League, declined the offer to pay his expenses, and remained for several weeks in America at his own charges, in order to appeal to the Christians of the United States on behalf of the cause which he held so sacred. If that appeal was not immediately successful there can be no doubt as to the ultimate result.

The National Council of Evangelical Free Churches also saw in the forthcoming visit of Berry to America a magnificent opportunity of extending the special work with which he had been so closely identified, and he was asked to address representative meetings of the ministers and leaders of the Evangelical churches in several of the large cities of the United States, with the view of furthering the federation of those churches.

The Council also made Berry the bearer of a letter to the American churches on behalf of arbitration, and commending himself and his message to them. The letter concluded as follows:—

“Our brother, the Rev. Charles Albert Berry, D.D., the first president of our Council, is about to visit the United States in obedience to invitations given to him by some of your churches and religious societies.

“The question of International Arbitration is so near his heart that, almost certainly, he will

speak of it in your hearing. He has no instruction as to what he shall say ; but we have such confidence in his practical wisdom, as well as in his ability to represent our feeling and judgment, that we ask you to receive him as a messenger of our goodwill, and a faithful exponent of our sentiment.

"Dr. Berry is sure to have a hearty welcome from you ; we commend him to you as a man who prizes your national honour and rejoices in all your prosperity, as he prizes and rejoices in our own."

Berry sailed from Liverpool in the *Teutonic* on October 27th, and was accompanied on this trip by Mr. and Mrs. John W. Sankey, of Wolverhampton, very close personal friends of his, connected with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. They arrived in New York on November 3rd, and on Sunday morning, November 7th, Berry gave an address at the Jubilee Service in Plymouth Church on "Beecher's Influence upon Religious Thought in England." He claimed Beecher for Christendom, and especially claimed that he had a distinct and effective influence upon the thought and preaching of England. "He was seldom seen and seldom heard by the great masses of the people of my country. Only a fraction of the religious leaders and teachers of Britain ever saw that face which reflected so much of the sunniness of God. It will appear to you quite clear, then, that his

influence was not the influence of personal presence or captivating eloquence, but was the influence of thought when reduced to the cold and lifeless level of a printed page. That fact is of value in determining the quality of Henry Ward Beecher.

"In the first place, Beecher's greatest work was that he helped to bring back Christendom to the realisation and enjoyment of the living Christ; to fill this present with the living God; to have the courage and the truth to say that if God is not here in Brooklyn, He never was in Jerusalem; that if He did not speak by His gifted prophet here, He had nothing to say to Abraham, nothing to David, nothing to Isaiah, nothing to Paul; and that if He be not here a living inspiration to comfort, and to quicken, and to bless, the whole story of His blessing in the past is one vast but beautiful fiction, to be buried henceforth from the thoughts of men—that is the truth and duty of the present time. And Beecher led us in England, as he led you in America, to see God, and to know that Christ was present, to see the lineaments of His face, to bask in the light of His spirit, and to feel all care and worry and weakness and limitation removed by the saving and emancipating touch of Christ in the heart.

"Out of this great truth, which Beecher taught us to recover, came another truth, namely, that the sources of theology are not to be found in

books, not even in sacred books, but in Christian experience. Having found the living Christ and recognised Him, having come into personal communion with Him, and felt the glow of the heart, and the awakening of the vision, and the sweetening of the temper, and the quickening of all the perceptive and appreciative faculties, it was an easy and a natural step to the conclusion that here are the great facts on which theology is built, out of which theology must be formed. As the scientist goes to Nature for his facts, and proceeds by methods of induction from observed facts to necessary conclusions, so, said Beecher, the theologian must come into the realm of Christian facts, discoverable in the great body of Christian experience, and must, by the same inductive methods, argue from these facts to what is true about God, and what is true about man and duty.

“It is true that the scientific student must have his class-book, must study his class-book, and by it be guided where to look for his facts, and how to treat them when he finds them. And so we have *our* text-book, this Bible of God, this book of man; and in addition to it we have our volumes of church history, and we have our histories of Christian doctrine and Christian method. But these are but guides, pointing us to where we shall find the great verifying facts and teaching us how to deal with them, and what to make of them, and

where to find them. Do you tell me that such a basis for theology is uncertain? that the experience of one man may differ widely from the experience of another man? That is true; for if out of mere individual experiences we were to attempt the construction of a theology, we should reach conclusions as confused and misleading as would be those of the scientist if he attempted, out of a little fact here and a little fact yonder, to construct a great scientific theory. Our induction must be from all the facts. My experience must be attested by yours, and yours by mine, yours and mine by that of a great company, that of a great company to-day by that of a great company which went before us. When so attested and confirmed it will be found that the great realities of religion are written in the hearts and souls of men; and that through a broad deduction from them we must arrive at our beliefs in theology. Mr. Beecher's theology was not made up out of books, did not constitute itself into propositions; it was the living interpretations of facts which he observed, and of experiences which he shared.

"And so it comes to pass, if you will allow me one illustration, that Henry Ward Beecher put before the Church the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ, which to me seems absolutely irrefutable. He did not merely gather texts strewn here and there over the Bible page, and piece them

together and say, 'This Book tells me that He was God, and I must believe it because the Book says it.' No; he went back into his own experience, into the experience of the Christian Church. And what did he find? He found there, unmistakably, a great yearning after God, a yearning so deep and persistent that only one thing could be concluded—that God put it there, and put it there as a ground of expectation that He would answer the craving that He had created. And out of that came clearly and necessarily the conclusion that the God who made man thus to need and yearn after Himself must answer him, must come to him, or must cease to be God. Thus it was that, arguing from Christian experience, Beecher learned that it was reasonable and obligatory for the God who made man to come to him, and speak to him, and work for him, and die for him. Then bringing these observations and reasonings to the light of the Scriptural revelation, and looking at the historic Christ from the standpoint of human cravings and needs, Beecher could not escape the conclusion that the Christ portrayed in the Gospels was God's answer to man's necessity. And in grateful surprise he cried, 'Why, this is God! There is not a single thing I would have in God but I find in Christ. There is not a single thing in Christ I would not like to have in God. Why, this is, this must be, God! I worship and I adore.'

"This is an illustration of the new method in

theology, largely inaugurated by Henry Ward Beecher. Do you not see how much more powerful, how much more conclusive, it is? Take any number of texts and prophecies and Messianic hopes written here in the Book, and you cannot build up a theory from them which you will not sometimes doubt and sometimes reject. But build up your theories from Christian experience, and you have an absolutely invulnerable castle of truth in which to live and breathe and work."

Berry went on to tell of some of the effects that flowed from these two great contentions and contributions. This method made theology the most vital and interesting of all studies, and it supplied the elements of certainty in religion. "In England, except in few and inconsiderable places, it would be impossible to-day to raise a heresy-hunt because a man brought before Christendom some results of Biblical criticism, or some new interpretation of any of the great doctrines of the faith. Why? Because men have come to see that whether Jonah is a fact or a fiction does not matter; that the spiritual and ethical truth in the story is the thing of importance; that whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not is of infinite unimportance, except as a matter of literary interest, so long as the great unfolding of the Divine will is seen to be unmistakable and Divine; and because men have come to see that the credibility of Christian truth finds warrant in

the hearts and souls of men, and not in the mere maintenance of historic propositions and theological theories. And so we in England live very calmly amid the busy development of scientific theory, amid the busier activities of Biblical criticism, amid the re-arrangement of doctrinal truth. We say, 'Do what you will with the mechanics of religion, you cannot take Him away from us; He is crucified in us afresh every day; He rises afresh in us every day; and, when we are willing, He sends Pentecosts of glow and power into our expectant souls.'

"You will never be able to identify Beecher with any one single doctrine, but he brought into the whole realm of theologic thought a new spirit, a new outlook, which broke down ancient superstitions, and made the way clear for men to work in new constructions, solid and beautiful, of Christian truth and Christian hope."

I have quoted at length from this important address because of its interest and value, not only as showing Berry's estimate of Beecher, but also because it reveals much of the speaker's own method and attitude in relation to the religious thought of his day.

At the close of this address, as well as at the evening service—when Berry preached on "The Mission of the Church"—and at a demonstration on the following Thursday, he had a hearty reception from a people who, "after the lapse of a decade,

were glad to welcome again, in the vigour of his prime, him whom they had loved in his ardent youth."

The Sunday at Plymouth Church was the prelude to a series of engagements which taxed the energies of Berry to the utmost for some weeks. He spoke or preached one hundred and one times during the thirty-five clear days that he spent in America. His engagements involved over 3,000 miles of railway travelling, most of it in night journeys. All this was happily accomplished without accident, and his heavy programme of work completed without his having to cancel any engagement through illness, although on one or two occasions rather alarming attacks of heart weakness almost incapacitated him, and made the labour of speaking at some important functions very trying. In addition to formal and official engagements, he attended many that took the form of receptions or banquets given in his honour. On his return he spoke most gratefully of the splendid welcome and warm-hearted hospitality everywhere extended to him, and of the love to the Mother Country which was made evident in so many ways in every place he visited.

On November 9th he spoke for an hour to the divinity students of Yale University, and two days later visited Union Theological Seminary, and gave an address of the same length on the "Elements of Success in the Ministry."

His second Sunday in America was spent at Montclair, New Jersey. Of his work there and of the general impression he made during his visit, Dr. Amory Bradford—an esteemed friend of both Berry and of his church at Wolverhampton—has told in his interesting and affectionate appreciation given at the close of this chapter.

✓ Berry reached Chicago on Saturday, November 20th, and was entertained at a reception at the house of Professor W. Douglas Mackenzie. On the following day he preached in the morning in the Union Park Congregational Church, and in the evening in the Second Presbyterian Church. On the Monday morning he addressed what was nominally a gathering of the ministers of the city in the auditorium of the Y.M.C.A. The hall was crowded to excess by an influential and representative audience composed of the leaders of the churches of the city, about a thousand people being present at an early hour. A little slip which he made in the course of his speech caused much good-natured amusement, and at the same time revealed the orator's readiness of wit and presence of mind. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and he had gone through England together advocating this federation of which he was speaking, and that without surrendering any of their theological convictions. "In fact, we had none to surrender," said Berry, grandly. The house came down in a roar of laughter that

pealed out again and again. When at last it subsided Berry said quietly, "That is one of the things which, as *Punch* would say, one had rather have expressed differently. Don't misunderstand me. There are no two men in England so full of theology as Price Hughes and myself—from the soles of our feet to the crowns of our heads we are brimful. What I intended to convey was, that there is nothing of these theological convictions that we are called upon to surrender so as to work upon a common platform and in a common cause." It was a capital recovery and was greatly enjoyed. Another incident which greatly amused Berry occurred at the close of the same meeting. A lady rushed up to him and thanked him heartily for his address, but still more his beautiful book, which she had read and greatly admired. "To which book do you refer, madam?" asked the doctor. "Oh, 'The Little Minister,'" said the lady, who had mixed him up in her mind with J. M. Barrie. "No," said Berry, "I did not *write* 'The Little Minister'; I *am* the Little Minister." This story has frequently been told in a garbled form, but I have satisfied myself that the incident was really as told here.

Berry spoke for eighty minutes in the morning, and in the evening spoke for over an hour at a meeting of the Congregational Club at the Palmer House. Miss Frances Willard was among the distinguished speakers who joined in the welcome to

the English guest. On the following day he addressed the students of the Theological Seminary at noon, and those of the Chicago University at four o'clock.

His fourth Sunday was spent in Boston, preaching in the morning for the Rev. Dr. Reuben Thomas, in the Harvard Congregational Church, Brookline, and in the evening for the Rev. Dr. G. C. Lorimer, in Tremont Temple, to an audience of three thousand people. On the following day he gave an address at the laying of the corner-stone of the Congregational House in the same city ; and in the evening spoke in Lorimer Hall to the ministers of all denominations in Boston and the vicinity. He dealt mainly with Church Federation and International Arbitration. At one point of his address a remarkable demonstration was witnessed. He put the question, as though he were in some doubt about it, whether he had the sympathy of his audience in expressing his personal desire for a permanent treaty of arbitration between the United States and Great Britain. The response to that question will not soon be forgotten by those present. "The applause," said a Boston paper next day, "was something memorable and mighty. It was decorous, to be sure, as became the place and the audience. People did not shout at the top of their lungs, nor did they stand on chairs and throw overcoats and umbrellas at the ceiling.

But the hand-clapping was as loud as it was possible to make it, and it lasted so long as the strength of the muscles of the many hundreds of pairs of wrists in Lorimer Hall held out. The audience stopped applauding from sheer exhaustion only, and not until it had several times begun again after a momentary respite."

Berry now had to make his way to Washington, in readiness for the onerous duties that awaited him on the opening of Congress. He had there to face his most delicate and difficult task. He said, in a letter to the *Christian World*: "The programme included three sermons on Sunday, a public meeting on Monday, and a series of private conferences with leading statesmen during my visit. My first call was upon our distinguished Ambassador, Sir Julian Pauncefote (now Lord Pauncefote), and my disappointment was great to find him a prisoner in his room, suffering from a painful attack of illness. Sir Julian had sent me a message before I left England, conveying his good wishes and his desire to see me in Washington. For some time it seemed hopeless that any meeting would take place, but to my surprise and pleasure, Sir Julian sent for me to his sick-room and gave me an interview, in which good feeling was accompanied with wise counsel, and both with hearty approval of my mission. It would be unbecoming in me to write of the part which Sir Julian has

taken in the international efforts after a just treaty of arbitration. But at least this much may and ought to be said, that whenever this desirable agreement comes to be ratified, our Ambassador at Washington will be found to have done more than any man living, alike by his tact, his skill, and his patience, in accomplishing one of the noblest and most promising achievements of statesmanship.

"The sickness of the President's mother, which has since issued in her decease, took the head of the State out of Washington just as I arrived. For a few hours he returned to the White House on Sunday night, leaving again on a fifteen hours' journey to Canton on the Monday afternoon. Much as I wished to see him, I felt that any attempt to take up his time or thought would be an unpardonable intrusion. Yet in this, as in the previous instance, my disappointment was quickly modified by an unexpected communication."

Before leaving the capital President McKinley directed his chief secretary to write a letter to Berry in the following terms:—

"Executive Mansion,

"Washington,

"December 6th, 1897.

"MY DEAR SIR,—As you may already know, several of your friends had arranged for a visit for you to the Executive Mansion to meet the President. The

President had expressed pleasure at the proposed opportunity of meeting you personally, and looked forward to expressing through you his goodwill to the Church movement which you represent and its relationship to the sister Churches in this country.

"Under the peculiarly sad circumstances, however, which surround the President and his household to-day, it is deemed impossible to grant you the audience referred to unless your visit in Washington is extended beyond the limits previously announced. In this case will you please communicate with me again, in order that I may obtain from the President the date at which it would be most convenient for him to grant an audience to yourself and the friends who may accompany you on the visit to the White House.

"Congratulating you sincerely upon the enthusiasm which your visit to the United States is creating in religious and philanthropic circles, and also upon the public compliment to your character and standing afforded by the invitation to officiate to-day and to-morrow in the House of Representatives and Senate,—Believe me, my dear Sir, with respect and esteem, very sincerely and faithfully yours,

"JOHN ADDISON PORTER,

"Secretary to the President."

"This gracious letter," says Berry, "was further emphasised by Mr. Secretary Porter in a personal interview, when he assured me how sincere was the

President's regret, and how thoroughly he was in sympathy with the great cause of international arbitration. One thing was made quite clear to me. As far as the President is concerned, the cause of peace is possessed of a firm friend. Were it within the prerogative of the Presidency to make or ratify an ample and satisfactory treaty of arbitration with Great Britain, there would be a speedy and effective conclusion of such an instrument of peace and progress."

On Sunday, December 5th, the day before the opening of Congress, Berry preached three times in Washington. His morning discourse was given in the First Congregational Church, which was packed to its utmost capacity. His sermon, over an hour in length, was on "The Elect Race," Isaiah xlv. 1. The preacher dwelt but little on the specific question of an arbitration treaty, but sought to lift the whole subject into the light of those great truths and duties which ought to guide and command the great nations of Christendom. He did not deal with the question as a politician, but as a prophet of God. America and England were two nations but one people, having one mission from God in His world. The Church must withstand the materialistic tendencies of great national prosperity. The only worth of national life is in its idealism, its transcendentalism, its devotion to ideal causes. He closed with an impassioned appeal that being

one in blood, one in inheritance, one in sentiments of liberty and progress, one in the evangelical faith of Christendom we must not allow petty jealousies nor apparently antagonistic material interests to sunder us, and so prevent us from carrying out our common mission from God to be the pioneers of law and liberty.

The services on the Sunday, and a meeting which Berry addressed on the Monday evening, were attended by a large number of senators and other representative and influential men, and he received many testimonies of their appreciation of his perfect fairness, and of the high ground that he had taken, and the weighty pleas he had addressed to them.

On the two following days he was the recipient of an unique honour in being asked, at the opening of Congress, to offer prayer on the Monday in the House of Representatives, and on the Tuesday in the Senate. This courtesy was extended to him on the invitation of Dr. Milburn, Chaplain to the Senate, and Dr. Conden, Chaplain to the House of Representatives, and was given with the consent and approbation of the leaders of each House. By express order of the Senate Berry's prayer was inserted in the Congressional Record. The prayer he offered at the opening of the House of Representatives will be read with interest:—

“Almighty God, Who dost raise up nations and

men for the furtherance of Thy kingdom, we give Thee thanks for the creation of this Republic, and for the continuance and growth of its strength, and its wisdom, and its influence. And we beseech Thee to meet with this second session of the fifty-fifth Congress, and to guide all Thy servants according to Thy will. Endow them with wisdom and grace for the rightful study and performance of the duties imposed upon them; and may they and the people they represent advance in wisdom and in power the general counsels of mankind and the particular interests of this Republic.

"Let Thy Holy Spirit guide and bless him who is to preside over the discussions and deliberations of this House. May the outcome of this session be seen in the extension of the bounds of freedom, and in the increase of prosperity and peace.

"Wilt Thou hear us when we specially commend to Thy care and keeping the President of this great Republic. Do Thou sustain him amid the private and family sorrows which have afflicted him, and give him strength for all the duties which await his fulfilment.

"And grant, we beseech Thee, that the blessings enjoyed by this nation may be shared by all nations to the furtherance and hastening of the Kingdom of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

He could not but be gratified by the honour

thus extended to him in being asked to open the House on the first day of the Session, and he took it not as a personal compliment, but as indicating great and growing cordiality of feeling on the part of the leading representatives of American life towards his country, and a recognition of the work he was seeking to accomplish on behalf of peace.

In addition to his public work he had many interviews with leading senators to whom he had letters of introduction, and the Vice-President placed at his disposal his room in the Capitol and his private secretary so as to facilitate these conferences. It says much for Berry's tact, judgment, and sagacity that he was able to accomplish all these delicate negotiations with more than the adroitness of a skilled diplomat—with the courage and courtesy of a Christian man who had sacred convictions to express and assurances to convey of the goodwill of the people of his own nation toward the people of America. It is not too much to say that in his personal intercourse, no less than by his powerful oratory, he won the respect and admiration of all whom he met, and what he more valued, the testimony that his mission had done much to further the cause he had so much at heart.

It was fitting that Berry's last evening in America should be spent at Plymouth Church.

A farewell reception, called a "Bon Voyage Night," was given to him by the Plymouth League. Addresses were delivered by the Rev. Samuel A. Eliot and Professor Backus, and Dr. Raymond presented Berry with a beautifully illuminated address from Plymouth Church. The address was as follows:—

"Plymouth Church, grateful to God for the inspiration it has received through the presence and message of its beloved brother, Charles Albert Berry, desires to convey to him and through him to the Queen Street Congregational Church, of Wolverhampton, England, its heartfelt thanks for their fraternal sympathy and co-operation in its semi-centennial jubilee."

Berry replied in his customary sanguine and buoyant strain. "I think occasion will come for me to visit you again. I have already tucked away in my portmanteau several calls to become pastor, and one, yes, one request to become a professor. I thank you on behalf of my church. It cannot compare in size or magnificence with some of your churches, but it is an intelligent church, with a love of freedom as wide as the platform of your church. It has been good to let me come, and I will go back so refreshed that perhaps we can make up for lost time."

On the following day, December 8th, Berry sailed for home amid the cheery good-byes of his

troops of friends, of whom surely few had forebodings that they should see his face no more, or that in three months he would lay down his charge, and in little more than a year would

“Conquer, and come to his goal.”

Those friends who were much with him while he was in America were not, however, without some forebodings. Dr. Rossiter W. Raymond wrote after Berry's death:—

“While he was with me on his last visit he was subject to frequent painful spasms, resembling *angina pectoris*, but, as he said, not really centred in the heart. To every service at Plymouth Church I insisted upon sending him in a carriage; and when he remonstrated at being thus carefully conveyed for only a couple of blocks, I told him it was my business to deliver him in good condition; he might suffer as much as he liked on his way home. He asserted that during and immediately after preaching he never suffered from these attacks. But I found out that on one occasion, after speaking in Plymouth Church, he was twice disabled before he finally and with difficulty reached my door.

“When I protested at that time against his restless and incessant activity, including almost continuous travel, and addresses in Chicago, Boston, and Washington, as well as New York and Brooklyn, he replied: ‘*Why, this is rest.*’ For weeks before

I left home to come here I was preaching eight times a week.' That might have been safe for another kind of preaching, but not for his.

"He has fallen in harness, in the prime of his manhood; and the world has lost what he might have given to it out of the fulness of a still riper age. We cannot justly judge what may seem to be his impetuous imprudence and lavish squandering of strength. Conscious, as I think he was, that he was marked for sudden and early death, he may have felt that any prudent husbandry of himself would be futile, and that the truest economy of his energy lay in the immediate accomplishment of as much as could be done with the broken and doomed physical machinery. As an engineer, I can appreciate such a situation. But, without daring to condemn his course, I cannot forbear to say that the tidings of his death have flooded me not only with sorrow for the loss of one of the dearest and noblest friends I have ever known, but also with unspeakable gratitude that Plymouth Church, by its mournful yet unquestioning acceptance of the recent resignation of its beloved pastor, has done what lay in its power to guard against the similar premature termination of a great and greatly blessed career. For among the gifts most needed by the Church and the world, mature wisdom is at once the first and the rarest. Ardent enthusiasm and self-sacrificing labour, thank God, will not

fail from among us, so long as souls continue to be born again and to be baptised with fire by the Holy Ghost. It is our highest and most unselfish duty to make sure that, in this age of intense and multifarious activity, we do not, for our own immediate enjoyment, exhaust such spirits and leave to the Master no matured and experienced leaders of His Church, except those who survive because they have so sluggishly-lived—blades that have not cut through their scabbards because they were dull from the beginning; fires that have burned long because they have always smouldered and scarcely flamed at all. This need not be. It was John, the son of Thunder, who outlived all the less intense Apostles, and whose last legacy to the Church of Christ was the most precious it ever received from human hands.

“Thank God for His apostles, *although*, but not *because*, they die young.”

I am glad to be permitted to close this chapter with another appreciation written by another distinguished and greatly attached friend of Berry's, the Rev. Amory H. Bradford, D.D., of Montclair, New Jersey.

“The first time that I met Charles A. Berry was at a meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, which was held in the City Temple in London, in 1884. Up to that date I had never even heard his name mentioned. In his genial, breezy way

he introduced himself to me and we had a delightful conversation. Instantly I was made aware that I was in the company of no ordinary man. This conviction was intensified when, a little later, he delivered an address about fifteen minutes in length.

"The occasion and subject were ordinary, but he made them memorable by one of the brightest platform speeches that I have ever heard. No other utterance of those meetings lingers with me after a lapse of fourteen years with equal vividness, except the address from the chair. Dr. Joseph Parker was chairman that year.

"When Mr. Berry was called to Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, I was in the midst of a long sickness, and did not see him during his stay in our country, but having many friends in that congregation, naturally I heard much of the impression which he made upon the people who had been accustomed to the unsurpassed eloquence of Henry Ward Beecher. Remembering what was said of his preaching and appearance at that time, I am sure that it was Mr. Berry's personality quite as much as his splendid oratory that influenced that somewhat critical congregation. With all truly great men the secret of power is in personality. More of what he was was reported to me than of what he had said. One man particularly was deeply impressed by what he regarded as an extraordinary feat of memory. After the sermon the first Sunday, this gentleman greeted

Mr. Berry, who instantly recognised him as a man who had been introduced to him years before in another city. He not only remembered his face, but called him by name. There had been no acquaintance, only a casual meeting many years previously, and yet the greeting was like that to an old friend. That man henceforward was bound to him with bands of gold. Plymouth Church was sadly grieved at his declining the call to its pastorate, but most people later accepted his decision as wise. If he had settled in the United States he would have had a royal welcome and a noble ministry, but he always seemed to me to belong to England, where his call was to be a 'Tribune of the People.' He never could have had so distinctive a mission here as he had there. Our problems are different. He would surely have adjusted himself to them and been a leader among us, yet he seemed to have a singular call to leadership among the Nonconformist churches of England. We never felt that he was less truly ours because he chose to remain in his native land. Indeed, it may almost be said that his influence was wider here because he was great enough, and unselfish enough, to decline the call to Plymouth Church.

"Later, when he knew that I was to occupy his pulpit at Wolverhampton, he wrote me characteristically genial and generous letters of greeting to his church — a greeting which was repeated

by the church itself. Indeed, the man and the people seemed to be inspired by the same hospitable spirit. Until he came to the United States for the last time, I had seen him but once. During that visit he was much at my house, and it was my privilege to be much with him in other places. Everywhere he instantly made friends. He was welcomed by the Editors of the *Outlook*, at a breakfast at the Aldine Club. The company was unusual in its literary quality, and was naturally undemonstrative; but he made a fine response to Dr. Abbott's greeting and captured the company at once, and as easily as he seemed to do everything else.

"Among the many eminent ministers from England and Scotland who have occupied the pulpit of the church of which I am pastor, none ever produced a deeper impression. I confess that I was anxious when Sunday came, for his reputation was so great that I feared that the people might be disappointed, but they were not, and to this day the echoes of that sermon are heard in this community. In the evening of the same day he spoke to an immense audience on the Federation of the Evangelical Free Churches in Great Britain. It has been my privilege to listen to much noble oratory, but seldom, if ever, have I heard that address surpassed. It showed the vision of a seer, the practical wisdom of a statesman, the generous catholicity of a true Christian, and the sustained eloquence of an orator. I have

never heard John Bright, but Dr. Berry's discourse that evening reminded me of what I had read of the wonderful power of that great Commoner over the audiences which he addressed.

"The reports of Dr. Berry's utterances in other cities reached me. Everywhere the impression which he made was the same. He performed an invaluable service in this country in the cause of Anglo-Saxon Unity and the Federation of the Churches. Both subjects were dear to him, and both have a larger place in the hearts of our people because of his advocacy.

"The last time that I saw him was on the *Germanic* on the morning on which he sailed for home. We met early, and walked the deck for well nigh an hour. In that time he told me of the places he had visited and the reception he had met with. He seemed to be delighted, and well he might be, for he knew that he was carrying to his English home the love and the enthusiastic appreciation of thousands of Americans.

"In that conversation he said that he hoped to return within a year or two and give a series of lectures on 'The Other Side of the War of the American Revolution.' He wished to show the American people that even in those old days of 1775-6, they had friends in high places in Great Britain, who had always believed in freedom and justice, and dared to oppose the policy of the King. The

ambition was a righteous one, but he was never to realise his wishes.

"When the cable flashed the message that Charles A. Berry was no more on the earth, thousands of hearts on this side of the ocean were deeply grieved.

"And yet I was not greatly surprised at the suddenness of his departure.

"Two or three times during our intercourse he had been in terrible suffering because of pain at the heart. One day on the streets of New York, while he was on his way to keep an engagement, he was in intense agony, and I knew then that probably he would some time go from his loved ones without warning. He told me of his disease, and clearly intimated that he was aware that he might be stricken at any time, and yet he never spared himself. He worked like one who felt that his days were numbered, and that not a moment was to be lost. 'The zeal of the Lord's House' consumed him. It was a cause of gratitude that he lived to be once more among the people who loved him so well, and from their midst to pass to his coronation.

"As an orator he won all hearts. What a rich and beautiful voice he had! How commanding his presence always was! Did anyone ever read Holy Scripture more perfectly than he? What a knowledge he had of the art of swaying men by public speech! In my opinion it was always

because the man was greater than his message. When some speakers are heard their utterances have little effect, simply because the men are unworthy of what they are saying. When Dr. Berry rose everyone felt the power of his personality. If we were asked what he said it might be difficult sometimes to answer, but it would never be difficult to define the secret of his power, or of the beneficent results of his preaching—it was in his manhood.

“I am well aware that this is no unprejudiced judgment of the life and work of my friend. Let me rather call it an appreciation. Doubtless he had his faults, both public and private, but they were not visible to the eyes of his American admirers. We loved him; we honoured him; we believed in him; we were made better by his presence and his speech, and now that we shall hear his voice no more we wonder, often, if anyone else will ever appeal to us with quite the same charm or with quite such persuasiveness.

“Hosts of Americans who have been helped by his broad and spiritual interpretations of truth; by his tireless efforts for catholic unity; by his enthusiasm in the course of human brotherhood, are behind me as I offer this poor tribute to the memory of their friend and mine — Charles A. Berry. He will long be remembered in England. While the present generation lives he will not be forgotten in the United States.”

CHAPTER XIV.

FAILING STRENGTH.

DURING all the years of Berry's busy manhood, his state of health was frequently a source of anxiety to his friends, and no doubt, although this was rarely confessed, to himself. Mention has already been made of the attack of rheumatic fever from which he suffered while in college, when he was about twenty, and which left a weakness of the action of the heart from which he never fully recovered. None but those nearest to him knew how brave was the battle he fought against this insidious weakness, at what a cost of suffering his arduous and exacting work was done, nor how serious was the risk he knew he was running by his persistence in toil.

In 1888 he spent his summer holiday in Switzerland—always his favourite resort. In the August of that year he walked with a party of friends from Meiringen to Grindelwald. The heat was intense, and, while crossing the Great Scheideck, he was taken seriously ill about a hundred yards from the summit. The symptoms resembled those of sun-stroke. He was with great difficulty carried to an

adjoining shelter, and, help having been procured, he was removed in a *chaise à porteurs* to Grindelwald, and was in a serious condition for some days. From this time the attacks of *angina pectoris* became more marked and persistent. Many times, while walking, this pain would seize him suddenly, and he would be compelled to rest till it passed off. Frequently, as has been said, he had severe feverish attacks, accompanied by great prostration.

During the weeks following his return from America, at the end of 1897, it became evident that his strength had been seriously overtaxed. The prolonged strain of work devolving upon him through the chairmanship of the Congregational Union, followed, without pause or rest, by his Herculean labours in the United States, led to a complete breakdown early in 1898. He fulfilled incessant engagements, mainly in connection with his own church, or in his own neighbourhood, in January and February, but it became increasingly evident that he was in a very serious condition. He had frequent and alarming attacks of excruciating pain, which left him very exhausted.

He could not be induced, however, to spare himself from engagements that would be likely to overtax him.

In January the Right Hon. C. P. Villiers, M.P. for South Wolverhampton, died, and that division was at once precipitated into the excitement of a vigorous

contest. The selected Liberal candidate was Mr. George Rennie Thorne, solicitor, of Wolverhampton.

Mr. Thorne had, at the General Election of 1895, contested Wolverhampton West against the sitting member, Sir Alfred Hickman. Berry had been the originator and conductor of that fight, and it was almost wholly through his influence that Mr. Thorne had consented to stand. In 1898, too, Berry brought all his influence to bear on Mr. Thorne, and succeeded in inducing him to comply with the request of the Liberal Association. The fight was a brief one, but it was also a very fiercely-contested one. Berry could not take the position in the south which he had taken in his own constituency of the west, but he threw himself with his accustomed vigour into the election. Ill as he was, he entered into and took an active part in all the multifarious preliminary details of the contest, and accompanied Mr. Thorne throughout the campaign. He spoke at as many as three different meetings in one night, held in various parts of the large and scattered constituency, putting his usual fire and energy into his speeches. It was a gallant fight, well and strenuously fought; but greatly to Berry's disappointment Mr. Thorne was defeated by 111 votes.

Berry had promised to attend the Third National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches in Bristol on March 8-10, and to give a report of his work

in America on behalf of Church Federation. On February 25th he wrote as follows to Dr. Mackennal, the honorary secretary of the Council:—

“MY DEAR MACKENNAL,—I hope my telegram reached you safely and quickly. I have a request to make. If you can possibly or fairly so arrange it, I would like to speak immediately after the chairman. I am in such a nervous condition just now—owing to long strain and overwork—that I cannot stand the waiting involved in a later position on the programme. I hope to be better in time for Bristol, but at present I am in the hands of the physician, who is angry with me for not stopping work and resting wholly. Many times have I wondered during my own imprisonment in bed how you are faring in matters physical! My prayers, and those of all your friends, are constantly raised in your behalf, that you may be given full restoration of physical power to overtake your spiritual designs and enthusiasms. But, after all, it is better for a man that life’s surplusage should be on the ideal rather than on the practical side.

“With fraternal affection,

“I am, ever yours,

“CHARLES A. BERRY.”

He had asked that not more than twenty minutes out of the Tuesday morning’s session should be allotted to him. Dr. Mackennal says: “I saw him leaning on a pew in great distress

before he came on the platform. He spoke for fifty-five minutes, and I never heard him more eloquent — all was simple, spontaneous, but the stream flowed on, strong and majestic to the close." On the Thursday evening he gave an address on "What has Christ done for the people?" Mr. Law, who sat next to him on the platform, remarked, "Why, Dr. Berry, you have notes to-night!" "Yes," he replied, "I am nervous ; I found it necessary to prepare." During that speech he had a serious attack of heart trouble, and told his friends afterwards what an experience he had gone through. He spoke with great power in this his last address at a large public meeting. It was on a congenial theme and in connection with a movement very close to his heart.

In this address he made a very interesting autobiographical reference. Some weeks before, in giving loving counsel to some young men in whose welfare he was deeply interested, he had offered to enter into an agreement with them that if for that year they would abstain from the use of intoxicants he would do the same. The compact was accepted. In this address at Bristol he said :—

"If I may speak a word of pleading with those who are not, in the technical sense, working men, I would ask them for the sake of Christ, and for the sake of man, and in view of the dire evils and the mischiefs which are attendant upon the traffic

in strong drink, seriously to consider whether it would not be best of all to give it up entirely. It is affirmed that total abstinence is not a Christian virtue. It has always seemed to me that permissive and optional virtues are the highest of all. And if a man should say 'Instead of enjoying myself I will make a surrender of my enjoyment for the sake of a worthy cause,' I call that a Christian virtue. By the grace of God I have taken that step myself, and, God helping me, for the sake of mankind that I love and want to serve, I mean to go along that line. Not, mark you, that I would ever suggest that there is compulsion in any example of this kind. I submit it to the sweet reasonableness of my fellow-men."

He concluded his address with these words: "Two men were living at the end of last century—Napoleon Bonaparte and John Wesley. Bonaparte was steeped in the principles and ideals of this world, and John Wesley was steeped in, and permeated with, and inspired by, the ideals of Heaven. Which did most for humanity? The one saturated a continent in the blood of his victims. And the empire he founded—where is it? The name he established is a name to curse with in France to-day. But what of Wesley? It is the men who believe in the other world who do most for this. It is the men who see the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off who make

beautiful the life of His subjects and children here. I have travelled much and far; I have lived with black men, brown men, yellow men, and white men; I have felt the heat in the torrid zone and been pinched by the frost on the northern shores; I have stood on the emerald isles of the southern sea, and I have been in the land of icebergs and fiords, and I have never yet known a land in which I have not come across a building, often plain, without any outward charms of the architect to attract, in which Wesleyan Methodists have been praising God, praying for the conversion of men, solacing and assuaging life's griefs and sorrows. Which would you rather be, if you had the choice to-day, Napoleon Bonaparte or John Wesley? Brother preachers, I am glad to see so many of you here—we are on the same side as Wesley. Let us catch his spirit; let us pray as he prayed, until we are fired and quickened by the strength that made hero and saint of him, and the delay of the Kingdom of God will not be long.”

On March 29th he was taken seriously ill, but was well enough by April 4th to travel with difficulty to London to consult Dr. Habershon. He went to Devonshire, but returned in a fortnight worse than when he left home. He had arranged to preach at his Sunday-school Anniversary Services, but at the last moment had reluctantly to submit to

withdraw from that and all other contemplated work. He was for some weeks the guest of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Sankey, at Finchfield House, Wolverhampton, where he was ministered to most devotedly, and where he enjoyed bracing country air and perfect quiet, and yet was within easy reach of his home and friends. He afterwards saw Sir William Broadbent, in conjunction with Dr. Habershon, and received somewhat reassuring reports as to the prospects of his ultimate recovery.

He wrote to his friends Mr. and Mrs. John Barben on May 21st: "My general health is better, but the frequent occurrence of these painful nerve-storms, with failure of the heart's action, keeps me from enjoying any sense of confidence in my recovery. My doctors, however, speak well of my splendid constitution and of my recuperative power, and are fairly hopeful that I shall regain at least a share of my former vigour. Meanwhile, I am doomed to silence, patience, and much lecturing—the latter somewhat harder to bear than my other afflictions. Meanwhile, if I am broken-bodied, I am not a broken-spirited man, but, as ever, Yours sincerely."

It was a great disappointment that he was completely laid aside from all public work at the time of Mr. Gladstone's death, and so was debarred from paying any public tribute to that great Christian statesman, between whom and himself there had existed a great, and, as he knew from many

gratifying tokens, a mutual, personal regard. During the negotiations between Plymouth Church and Berry in 1887, an enterprising member of that church who was in England at the time put himself into communication with Mr. Gladstone, and secured from him very cordial testimony as to Berry's ability and as to his respect for the young Non-conformist minister whom he had met politically.

Early in June Berry went to Southport, and at Claremont, the home of Mrs. Martin, his wife's mother, he was ministered unto with most watchful and devoted affection. While in Southport he had placed himself under Dr. Reinhardt Anderson, who gave him most vigilant and skilful care, but who, almost from the first, seems to have taken a grave view of his patient's condition.

During all these months Berry suffered much, but during the intervals he was wonderfully bright and cheery, and those who saw him when free from pain found it hard to believe that they were with a man who knew that he stood in jeopardy every hour. He was generally sanguine and buoyant, but sometimes, after an exceptionally severe attack of pain, he had moments of despondency, when to those who were nearest to him he expressed his dread of lapsing into chronic invalidism and to years of silence and uselessness.

He was greatly cheered by the visits of friends, both from England and America, among them

being Dr. Washington Gladden (who went over twice to see him) and his dearly-loved friend, Dr. Guinness Rogers, whose visit greatly cheered him.

In August he left Southport for the Lake District, staying for some weeks at the Derwent-water Hotel, Portinscale, where the thoughtful kindness bestowed upon him touched him deeply. The hotel was crowded, and Berry, as usual, had a coterie of loving admirers around him, and, when free from pain, was the life and soul of the company. One pompous and haughty duenna, however, lifted her eye-glasses for a supercilious stare at him, and said, "I can't make out who this Dr. Berry is, about whom everybody is making such a fuss." A bright American girl was sitting by, and said, with a rich, down-east accent, loudly enough to be heard by all at the table, "What! you don't know who Dr. Berry is? I could never have believed it of anybody in England. Well, ma'am, perhaps you don't happen to know who Dr. Berry is, but if ever you go across the Atlantic, don't you say, 'Who is Dr. Berry?' to anyone, or else everybody will ask, 'Who are you?'" How Berry laughed over it, as he recounted the incident to a friend who had run over to see him!

Soon after his return to Southport, Berry was saddened by the death of a dearly-loved friend, Mr. J. J. Colman, M.P., whose home by the sea at Corton had been to Berry, as to many another, a resting-

place, where he had often enjoyed most gracious hospitality and kindness. He wrote as follows to Miss Colman on September 20th :—

“The news of Mr. Colman’s death came upon my wife and myself with shocking suddenness late last evening, afflicting us with grievous personal pain, and filling us with solicitude for you all. Coming in such a swift succession of family bereavements, and following so closely upon an occasion of family festival, this sad event cannot but tax to the utmost your faith and fortitude. You have, however, amid your recent sorrows, given such splendid evidence of the strength of the trustful heart that one can only pray that He who before-time gave strength for strain will be sought and found as giver of grace in the hour of need. Meanwhile, and in so far as such a sacred sorrow can be shared, you have the comfort of knowing that numbers of people of every class and degree, who shared your pride in your father’s nobility, now share your sorrow over the still hand and the silent voice. As for myself, I count it one of the great privileges of my life to have enjoyed such close intimacy with one whose career was formed by highest principle and devoted to ceaseless and unselfish service. Your father has indeed erected many monuments which will perpetuate his memory and earn the benediction of his fellows. His justice and generosity as an employer of labour, his broad-mindedness and

liberality as a citizen, his wise zeal as a social reformer and progressist, his practical work in the spheres of education, temperance, and religion, and, above all, his example of unselfish devotion to ideal aims, will ever surround his name with a halo of grateful appreciation. Not least among the characteristics which charmed the more intimate friends of your father was his almost perfect embodiment of truthfulness with graciousness and courtesy. In the present condition of English society, sadly seamed and scarred as it is by ecclesiastical division and prejudice, perhaps there is no more difficult position than that of a high-minded Nonconformist who is called upon to be true to his convictions in quarters where they are neither understood nor respected, and yet to blend this fidelity with faultless grace and charity. Your father was a truly impressive embodiment of blended grace and truth, and was so because he possessed that essential catholicity of mind from which charity, not less than fidelity, springs as a natural fruit. Amid the sorrow and the pain of parting from such a parent you are to be congratulated on your inheritance of rich remembrance and sacred example. May your loved and lost ones live again, and live more fully, in those of you who remain. And as once more you are baptised for your dead in new consecration to the living, may you have assurance in your hearts that life has conquered death."

In the previous year Mr. Colman and his family had suffered a trying bereavement through the death of his son, Mr. Alan Cozens-Hardy Colman. Berry wrote the following letter, which contains many of the characteristics of sympathetic letters treasured by hundreds of friends to whom he had sent a message in some dark hour.

"March 27th, 1897.

"MY DEAR ETHEL,—Until the paper arrived which you kindly sent to my wife, we were unaware of your return. The sad news of Alan's death reached us immediately, and had we known where to find you we should have sent prompt messages of love and sympathy. But you would be well assured that all who knew him and who know you were deeply moved by your great sorrow.

"My heart is specially sore when I think how great a blow has fallen upon your dear father, and while I have prayed for all of you, I have specially prayed that your father may be sustained and solaced by the God of all comfort.

"Alan's life was very noble and beautiful! How manly he was, yet how gentle and considerate: serious without being dull, firm and yet not hard, upright but not stiff, whose love never sickened into sentimentality, and whose sense of honour was absolutely untainted by conventional ideas—he was indeed a fine embodiment of virtue and grace.

"That such a life should have been translated

so early is a great mystery. It would seem as if some lives are sent into the world not so much for a career of their own, but in order to enlarge and inspire other and longer lives. They come, they grow up in strength and grace before our eyes, they win our affection and admiration, and then they go away—and when they are gone we discover not only how great is the loss we have suffered, but how incalculable our gain in their having been with us at all. Such a life was dear Alan's.

"It was enrichment to know him—a real sacrament to hold fellowship with him. I can only trust that in this sense of gain, of which you are all so conscious, may be found some assuagement of the grief you feel in temporary severance. Your sorrow is ours in a sacred degree, and ours shall be the prayer in your behalf that the all-sufficient grace of God may be your strength and solace.

"Pray give our love and sympathy to Mr. Colman and to all your home circle. With similar messages for yourself, I am, ever yours,

"CHARLES A. BERRY."

At the autumnal meetings of the Congregational Union, held in Halifax, the following resolution was passed amid manifestations of deep feeling and brotherly sympathy at the Assembly on Tuesday morning, October 11th, and conveyed to Berry by telegram:—

"This Assembly desires to express the heartfelt sorrow with which it still misses from its gatherings and its counsels the genial presence and the wise speech of its ex-chairman and beloved brother, Dr. Berry.

"It deeply sympathises with him in his prolonged and painful illness, and assures him of the fervent prayers that continually ascend from many hearts for his restoration to health, and for his return to the service of the faithful people whom he loves so well, and of the denomination between which and himself there exists the warmest attachment.

"It commends him and his family to the continual care of the Eternal Father, and prays that amid all his trials and disappointments he may be enabled to maintain a cheerful courage and have rich experience of the perfect peace of those whose minds are stayed on Him."

To this Berry sent the following reply, written on the same evening:—

"To the members of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

"DEAR BRETHREN,—Your message of sympathy and goodwill has greatly cheered me. Notwithstanding many drawbacks and disappointments I have many reasons for gratitude and hope. Through your prayers, and with the blessing of God, I look with confidence to the restoration of health and

the renewal of my work. There is still need for watchfulness, self-restraint, and patience, but with the exercise of these qualities there is every reason to anticipate the happiest results. In the meantime it is a solace and a support to be remembered in so many excellent ways by the brethren I love. My heart flows out to you in appreciation and gratitude.

"May your Assembly be enriched and inspired by devoutness of spirit, earnestness of purpose, breadth of view, and consecration of gifts, and may the Master be in the midst to guide you as you think and speak and plan for His churches and kingdom.—I am, ever yours,

"CHARLES A. BERRY."

During these months Berry received many other messages of sympathy and affection from his brethren in the ministry, and from the churches and societies he had so zealously served. In reply to such a message from the West Midland Baptist Association, he wrote to the Rev. James Ford, Bromsgrove, July 11th, 1898. ". . . When I possessed health and vigour it was a joy to me to occasionally occupy your pulpits and to take a share in your work, but while enjoying the confidence and esteem of many of your ministers, I never could have believed that my labours had won such affection as your message reveals. I need not say how deeply I am touched,

nor how greatly I am encouraged. Should the Master restore to me the power and the opportunity of fresh service, I shall hope to do something towards the payment of the debt which your goodness has created. Meanwhile it will gratify you to know that your message has done much to cheer me during many dark and difficult days."

✓ In October Berry again consulted Dr. Habershon, who confessed to disappointment at the slowness of his recovery, but did all he could to cheer his patient. He could not conceal from him that his attacks were attended with immediate fatal peril, and indeed Berry well knew the imminent danger in which he stood. He returned from London somewhat encouraged, but chafing at the prospect of the prolongation of the idleness to which he was still to be subjected, and which sorely taxed his fortitude and patience. In November he wrote to Mr. May, one of his deacons: "It is difficult just now to estimate my prospects of work. My mind is as eager, as alert, as ever it was, and refuses to be put under any vegetating *régime* of indifference; but, alas! my body, and especially my heart, absolutely resists the slightest pressure. I cannot help an occasional outburst of impatience, followed by periods of depression, at this enforced and continued disability; and I think you are especially able to appreciate the weariness

of it all to a man of my temperament. But I really do try my best to 'wait, and be of good courage,' and to believe that out of this discipline I shall be led into a larger power and place of service. But I need your prayers, and the prayers of the Church, to sustain me, for the burden is great." At the end of November he had a serious relapse, and the attacks were more severe and alarming than ever. I saw him shortly afterwards while he was still prostrate from the excruciating pain from which he had been suffering. He was wonderfully cheerful and buoyant, taking the keenest interest in life and men, and looking forward with pathetic eagerness to the return to his home and people, and to the partial and gradual resumption of his work. He said to me, "I want to get back to my folk and to do something, if only little. If I can preach I will preach quietly and without previous announcement; if I can offer a prayer, or read the Scriptures, or even give out a hymn, I shall be glad, and glad to be with my people again. Haven't they been wonderful in their patience and affection? Never a man had such a church as mine!" He returned home in December, seeming very feeble, to his anxious people, but still bearing up with his old indomitable courage and cheeriness. One Sunday, when the Rev. Samuel Pearson, of Manchester, was preaching at Queen Street, Berry opened the

morning service and offered prayer, but Mr. Pearson dissuaded him from attempting more, as it was evident that he was quite unfit for the strain that even this had involved. He wrote the same day to Mrs. Martin:—

“December 11th, 1898.

“DEAR GRANNIE,—You ought to know by the first post what has happened. Mr. Pearson of Manchester is preaching for me to-day, and *I took the first part of the service*, including the invocatory prayer. My wife objected, my deacons objected, but I did it, and now everyone is pleased. People said my voice was splendid, but, of course, I knew it was not up to standard, and I trembled very much, but I had no pain. After service *I walked the whole way home without a stop*, though, of course, I cannot do any more to-day. I shall not forget to be careful in spite of my success to-day, for I have had too many drawbacks to imagine I am yet through the wood. But as far as it goes, and for what it is worth, I am in high glee about to-day's proceedings Your audacious son,

“CHARLES.”

The strong man who had been a very king in that pulpit was now the broken sufferer, thankful that he could do even a very little, and the voice that had rung like a trumpet through that sanctuary was soon to utter its last message within those walls.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BORDERLAND.

THE year 1899, which proved so sadly eventful, opened for Berry and his people with some degree of confidence and hope. In a letter written to the *Christian World*, dated January 3rd, he thanked his friends for countless kindly messages he had received, and "for the light they shed upon many dark hours, and the courage they inspired when pain brought peril and hope was dim." He went on to say: "May I add a word as to my present condition and prospects? Some of my correspondents have written as if I had now quite recovered my former strength, and some have even linked requests for service to their kind congratulations. It will save much trouble and delay if it be understood that I am only on the threshold of convalescence, that I am allowed the luxury of a little work only because it ministers to contentment and hope, and that what little work I can manage is all due to the church which has prayed and waited for me with a love beyond repayment." He had gained strength since his return home, and was able to preach once on each of the five Sundays in January. On New Year's Day, in accordance with his custom,

he preached on "Our Good Word," which he had selected some weeks before as the motto for the year, Hebrews xi. 27: "As seeing Him who is invisible." When published in the Church Manual, this discourse was followed by the Pastor's letter to the children of the congregation based on the same topic. He concluded this as follows: "Before closing my letter, I should like to say how grateful I am to be back amongst you once more, to speak to you of unseen things, and to help you to grow in wisdom and grace. Our heavenly Father has led me through some very dark places since I went away, but I have found out the truth of what many good men have said: there are some things—the best things—that can only be seen when the lights of life are turned low, and the Light of God is left to shine alone!"

His second sermon was on "Completeness in Christ," Colossians ii. 10, and dealt with the reality, the closeness, the richness of the believer's union with Christ. "We are more than followers, learners, friends; we are bound to Him in a more than natural relation, one that is vital, organic, dependent, and derivative, and that 'more' is expressed by the phrase 'In Christ.' All that is His is ours and ours His. *His* our sin, our penitence, our fears, our weakness, our hope. *Ours* His death, His resurrection, His reign, His dominion."

His third sermon was on "The Middle Watch,"

Matthew xxvi. 40. In this utterance he dealt with the Christian's attitude towards the perplexing problems of evil, the dark facts of life, disciplinary sorrow, whether his own or others, and towards death. The brief notes with which Berry concluded a sermon that made a very deep impression may be of interest: "Shall we not watch with Him? We can never feel the pressure as He did. We can only stand on the outskirts of Gethsemanes such as His. *He* alone. *We* always have Him. If He could trust, I can. If He could die for the world, I can wait for its full deliverance. It is but for 'one hour.' Patience, my soul, be still, the morning cometh."

On January 22nd he preached a sermon on "Mistaken Interpretations of Experience," based on the words: "And Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went; and the Angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him," Numbers xxii. 21, 22. The points of an ever-memorable discourse, one of the most powerful that Berry ever preached, were these: "While Balaam saddled an ass to carry him, God commissioned an angel to obstruct him; in what followed, owing to his wilful blindness, he mistook the beneficence of an angel for the stupidity of an ass; and not until he ceased buffeting his beast of burden did he awake to the

presence of a minister of instruction. It was not the ass, but the angel, that stopped him; yet being such as he was and in such furious temper at obstruction, he persistently and repeatedly mistook the angel for an ass. The beginning of all mistaken interpretations of life must be traced to the false ideas with which we start—false estimates of life's resources in liberty and self-sufficiency, false ideas of life's meaning and intent, false motives and aims in life's pursuits. Balaam had calculated and provided for all the requirements of his journey. He had counted, weighed, estimated, anticipated the facts of the situation as they presented themselves to his notice. He had looked behind, around, ahead. Why should he not feel confident and complacent? So asks worldly wisdom, but the wisdom that is more than worldly detects an omission. Balaam forgot to look *above*. This initial blunder was the elimination of God out of life's equation. Do not most men live in an atmosphere that magnifies the ass and hides the angel? Life is not independent and self-sufficient, but dependent and under government; it is not given us for selfishness and luxury, but for discipline, for the formation of character, for the attainment of virtue and power; its inclosing and completing circumference is not to be found in a small rim round the centre, but in a circle, and sweeps through eternity and reaches out after the infinite! Begin life with any

other views, from any other point, in any other spirit, and as sure as Balaam's ass crushed his master's foot against the wall, as sure as Balaam met with a check that filled him with dismay and temper, so will you be turned upon and rebuked by the ass of your own conceit, on which you have chosen to ride through life to fortune." Berry, changing the figure of speech, then gave a characteristic illustration. "Let me address you in the language of mechanics, with which most of you are familiar. If you are to get anything out of a machine you must have power enough behind it to move all its parts; if you are to work it successfully, you must learn from its maker the meaning of its contrivances, and the parts where the danger of friction demands watchfulness and lubrication; if you are not to smash it, or to implicate it in hopeless confusion, you must know what it was meant to produce, and you must work it to produce that one thing and not another. A machine that was constructed to make fine calico will go to pieces if you try to make it turn out coarse horse-cloths. There would be some trouble, and not a few calls for the surgeon, if you insisted to-morrow on trying to roll boiler-plates out of a mill gauged to produce sheets. These things are an allegory."

An intimate ministerial friend of Berry's, the Rev. E. R. Edwards, has told me of a half-hour

spent in Berry's study, when the talk turned on this very sermon.

"Tell me something of your Sunday night's sermon on 'The Angel and the Ass,'" I said to him when we had settled ourselves down in his study for a pipe on the Thursday before his death. I had heard many references to that sermon, and to the profound impression it had produced. Berry fenced a little, but at last began. I shall never forget that half-hour. He was as interested in the theme (and what wonder!) and grew almost as earnest as he had been in the pulpit on the Sunday evening. The drift of his thought, as well as I can recall it, was that we are all too prone to regard the lower rather than the higher ministries that help our life on earth—to have eyes for the ass but none for the angel, and that it is only when our eyes are open to see the angel that the best of God can reach us. I can see him now—the fine, expressive face illumined with the light of a wondrous tenderness that shone in those clear, beautiful eyes as he quoted one of his illustrations. "Three months ago, when I was lying a poor, helpless, pain-racked man yonder in Southport, a letter reached me from a friend, a letter full of sympathy and concern and genuine affection. But in the letter was this sentence: 'If anyone tells you, as plenty of people are sure to have done, that God has sent you this suffering, don't believe

him. God never sends suffering, not even to sweeten and strengthen men, although He does strengthen them in spite of the suffering. Believe me, dear friend, your sufferings were sent by the devil; *he* is the sole author of pain. The devil owes you many a grudge for the hard blows you have given him in Wolverhampton and elsewhere, and now he is going to stop you if he can. Don't blame God for this, but pray to Him to put down Satan under your feet.' 'Ah!' said Berry, 'I thank my friend with all my heart. I know well he meant to comfort me. But,' and, as he leaned towards me, the look in his face was that of a man who had seen God and learned His secret, 'I am not going to let him rob me of my angel.'

Berry's last sermon was preached to his own people on Sunday morning, January 29th, two days before his death. He conducted the whole of the service himself, with the exception of the address to the children, which was given by the Rev. J. G. Watson, the assistant pastor, from the text, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Berry read as one of the lessons I. Corinthians xv., "the great Resurrection chapter," as he used to call it. He read it with thrilling intensity of feeling, and many noted that as he read, the tears streamed down his face. He took as his text I. Corinthians xvi. 1, "Now concerning the collection for the saints." The occasion

was Home Missionary Sunday, and the collections were on behalf of the Staffordshire Congregational Union, which has for its main object the maintenance of the village churches in the county. This work was one that lay very near to the preacher's heart, and one into which he had thrown much enthusiasm and devotion. His people testify that in its impassioned eloquence, depth of feeling, and vigour of thought their pastor had never excelled the effort of that morning. Unhappily, but little of the sermon was written. He wrote a page and a half of introduction, and then nothing but his four divisions, as follows:—

Reasons why we should care for these outposts:

1. Because in many cases they are the only centres of evangelical light, and life, and liberty. ✓

2. Because the spread of education is making greater demands on our country churches. ✓

3. Because our country churches are the first to feel the effects of commercial depression, and the last to share in any return of commercial prosperity. ✓

4. Because we are in debt to our country churches for some of the ablest ministers and noblest standard-bearers in our town and city churches. ✓

In the course of his sermon he stated that during the week he had been driving with a friend in the country and had an interesting conversation with

the wife of one of the leaders of an out-of-the-way village church, herself an intelligent and devoted worker. She had preferred an indictment against many of the preachers who came to their little chapel somewhat to the following effect: "They get into the pulpit and apologise for not being prepared, but do it as though that did not make much matter, as they were only in the country. Their illustrations are all of an agricultural character, about ploughing and reaping, things about which they don't know much and, as they judge, the only things about which we know anything. They think we eat nothing but fat bacon and never read a book. They are very much mistaken, Dr. Berry, and I wish, when you have a chance, you would tell them so. We don't want to be looked down on as they seem to look down upon us." Berry gave this pithy message, worthy of Mrs. Poyser, in his own inimitable, racy way, and from it made a heart-stirring appeal to the village preachers and to the congregation generally on behalf of the rural churches. The awakening of the villages threw a larger responsibility on the town churches to help them in the realisation of their quickened aspirations and growing necessities. Berry closed a most impressive service by announcing one of his favourite hymns, "There is a land of pure delight," which was sung to the tune "Beatitudo," also a great favourite of his.

During the evening he wrote a letter to one of

his deacons stating that he had been rather ill since preaching that morning, but was now (6 p.m.) beginning to feel better, and concluding with the memorable words already quoted in another connection, "But I would rather preach and suffer than be silent and strong."

It is no mere pathetic afterthought that made all who heard these five sermons catch in them a note of strenuous urgency, as that of a man who knew how near at hand was the night. One of his hearers, Mr. George Snape, in a singularly able and discriminating sketch of his pastor in the pages of *Mutual Help*, says of these last sermons—"I have seen it stated that, in the opinion of some, his earlier sermons were superior to those of a later date. From this opinion I must entirely dissent. In my judgment, his later discourses have been fully equal to his earlier ones in clearness of reasoning as well as in literary finish; while they have been characterised by a spiritual insight, a wide sweep of vision, a ripeness of thought, and withal, an oratorical power which made them incomparably greater. It was my great privilege to hear four of the five sermons he preached in his own church after his return from Southport; and I consider them indisputably four of his finest efforts. Never have I heard four such pulpit orations from any other man, and never have I seen congregations held in such thrall."

On the day following his last service in Queen Street, Berry attended a meeting at the Town Hall in connection with the proposed Free Library, which was to be built as a commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen's reign. Alderman Craddock, one of his deacons and a close personal friend, was chairman of the committee, and Berry was anxious to be present and to further the movement. In the course of the meeting he had a very severe attack of illness, and had to be helped from the Council Chamber to the town clerk's private room. A medical man, a member of the Corporation, was present at the meeting and rendered all possible assistance, but four or five hours elapsed before Berry was well enough to be removed to his home.

During the evening he wrote a letter to his elder son, Herbert Martin Berry, a medical student in Liverpool, whose twentieth birthday was on the following day, that of his father's death. The letter was full of wise counsel and encouragement and warm affection. He closed by saying:—

“I was rather tired by yesterday morning's service, and was unfortunate enough to suffer a bad attack in the Council Chamber at noon to-day. But I am jogging along as best I can, and still hoping that I may some day be delivered from the pains and perils which at present beset me. Meanwhile, and whether I am to live or to die, I have

great joy and hope in you and in my other children. May God bless and keep you all.

“ Your affectionate

“ FATHER.”

On the Tuesday morning, January 31st, he left home to conduct a marriage at his church, greatly against the persuasion of his wife and friends, as he was in a very tremulous condition. They urged his unfitness to undertake any work, but he would have it that he was better, and quite equal to fulfilling this engagement. This service was to be followed by one of an exceptionally trying character. His medical adviser and dearly-loved friend, Dr. Totherick, had died during the preceding week and was to be interred that day. The ties between the two men had been singularly close. Dr. Totherick's care of him had been most sedulous and untiring for many years, and a warm affection had sprung up between them. Some time before, when Berry was sadly overwrought and suffering from nervous prostration, Dr. Totherick had been vainly urging him to give up all work for some months as his only hope for complete restoration, and then offered, as an inducement towards this, to retire from his profession to travel with him. He was a man of varied gifts, of charming personality, and of great kindness of heart. He had not, until about a year before his death, belonged to any Christian church, and, indeed, was judged

by many to be an agnostic. This was partly the result of his impatience with all unreality and with anything that savoured of cant. Berry's influence over him had been a very strong and gracious one. He proved him to be a man of great reverence and spirituality. They had many talks on the highest things, and twelve months before his death, to Berry's boundless delight, he received from his friend a very beautiful confession of faith, and a request that he would submit his name to the church at Queen Street as a candidate for fellowship. Berry was deeply touched and cheered by this, and his words in commending his friend at the Church Meeting will never be forgotten by those present.

Under these circumstances, Berry was most anxious to conduct the service at the burial of his friend and to say a few words in testimony to the faith and goodness of one whom he esteemed so highly, and words that only could be spoken by himself, as he alone had known the man as he was. He felt that necessity was laid upon him to testify to the members of his friend's profession what manner of man the beloved physician really had been.

The interment was to take place at Wesley Chapel, Bilston, about three miles from Wolverhampton. Berry drove thither after the marriage ceremony at his own church and after a brief

service at Dr. Totherick's house. He gave the following address as he stood within the communion rails. Not one word had been written, but he spoke with singular ease and vigour and touching eloquence to the large and influential assembly. He said:—

“We are assembled amidst the circumstance and trappings of death to celebrate the triumph—eternal and unshakable—of life. Our funeral ceremonies have reference only to the decaying and the decayable part of us. We are here to rejoice that the man who is in all our thoughts, in all our hearts, has indeed arisen and is alive for evermore. If I did not believe that life was triumphant, all life, however beautiful it might at times appear, would be to me a ghastly grimace, a blasphemy against the creature, a cruelty of the Creator. But we are here to thank God that in a world which is full of cares, the assurance of immortality lives, and that though in a few moments we are to commit to the earth all that is left here of one we loved, we know and are certain that he lives and sees his Maker face to face. Along with gratitude to God for the revelation of life, we are here to-day to pay a loving and a sincere tribute to the memory of a man of singularly chaste and beautiful life. He belonged to a profession which stands in the forefront of the vocations to which God calls, and for which God fits His ablest sons. Of old time, in

the Apostolic age, Luke, the beloved physician, played at least as vital, if not as prominent, a part in the great missionary work of the Apostle St. Paul as did St. Paul himself. Paul and Luke together—the one gifted with marvellous speech, the other skilled with a marvellous power of healing—went forth to proclaim that Gospel which is a Gospel of life and health for this world and the next. But as it is in every highest vocation and every highest gift of God, there are few professions that are so open to subtle temptation as the profession of medicine and of surgery. The higher the gift that God imparts, the greater the responsibility, and oftentimes the more terrible the temptation which accompanies it. It is our joy to-day to bear witness that amid all the temptations of his profession, James Totherick lived a life simple, sincere, and pure; the man was never lost in the scientist, the curious student of ways and means and method never overshadowed the sympathetic and loving healer and assuager of pain. To the man, a physician, occupying such a post as our friend filled, there came confidences secret and sacred, as such confidences do come to men in a profession that so often has to face life's last hours and the coming of death; but with a loyalty to his Master and a loyalty to the honour and fame of his profession, our friend and brother maintained the sacred secrecies that came to him and became in turn a

helper and friend to those who were bereaved and sorrowing. It is pleasant to remember that, though so devoted to his profession, the deceased never sank to professionalism. His manhood linked with kindness and grace the unselfishness and the gentleness of a beautiful heart and a tender hand. He had sympathies and aptitudes beyond his profession. The presence of so many of the medical profession of Wolverhampton and Bilston here this morning is an adequate and eloquent tribute to the place our brother held in their ranks. But we have also present with us to-day students of literature and students of art, two branches of higher life in which our brother distinguished himself; for he was no small or narrow reader; his sympathies were not confined and imprisoned in narrow tracks of thought. Cosmopolitanism was stamped upon his every deed. It is even more beautiful to recall how that his sympathy with the poor led him to join the Guardians of the Poor, to which body he was elected by the overwhelming voice of the constituents to whom he appealed. We know, full well, it was with no desire to occupy a public position—from which public position in itself he shrank—that he sought the suffrages of the people. But it was because, as his fellow-Guardians here present could testify, he had a desire to minister to the poor in such ways as a man with such skill in the post he sought to win might exercise. And

those of us who knew him well know how when amongst the children he was at home. It often happens that men to whom God sends no children of their own have a heart for all the children of others. James Totherick was a friend to children. I am accustomed to think and to say that the best, the final test of the best that is in man is to be discovered in the relations of children to him. The instinct of a child is to me far more unerring than the judgment of wise and thoughtful men. When I saw, as I often did see, in my own house, and in the houses of others, children run to him and smile at him, I knew there was a child's heart in him, full of sympathy and of love. Why stand I here to-day to speak to you? The things I have uttered you know as well as I do, but there is something you do not know as well as I, and that you ought to know, and must know, before the remains of our friend are interred. I was his patient, his friend, his pastor. For nearly sixteen years James Totherick, associated in so few minds with faith and the idea of Christian consecration, had talks with me on matters supreme. There were those in the district who thought he was cold; some who even said he could be cynical; I have even heard it whispered in years gone by that he was sceptical. I know that these were libels and falsehoods against my friend. If ever man lived who believed in God, it was the man

whose remains we are soon to commit to the earth; if ever there was a man who, whilst rebelling against many evil theologies, and protesting against some of the Shibboleths of churches and creeds, yet rejoiced in the belief that God was in Christ reconciling Himself to the world and the world to Himself, it was James Totherick. I know that of which I speak. One of the last things he said, when his memory could hardly recall the text of Tennyson's beautiful poem, was, 'I shall see Him face to face.' And he has seen Him. This death is but a mockery and a pretence; it is life that triumphs, a life in Him so beautiful and now for ever glorified. From this service, from these reflections upon a beautiful life, may God give us grace to go back to the life that still remains for us. May we learn to put under our feet little Shibboleths of creed and party, and live a broad, beautiful life, like Christ lived, like this servant of Christ lived, that so when our hands, however skilled, lose their cunning, and our tongues, however eloquent, are for ever silenced in death, our spirits may know as they leave this earthly tenement that we have the most priceless heritage of all—the honour of God, the love of man, the benediction of the poor and of the little ones."

As the speaker paid this tribute of affection to his friend, many skilled eyes noted with concern and even with foreboding that his face wore a

strained and blanched look. It was evident that the service was costing him much—but none in the assembled throng dreamt how much—in deep emotion even more than in physical effort. At the close of the address he asked all present to unite with him in prayer. He slowly knelt down, and for two or three minutes, with great tenderness of tone, he gave thanks for their friend's beautiful life and faith and charity. Then he began to commend the widow to the consolation and upholding of the Eternal Love. "Thou knowest we would bear this burden for her if we could, but this Thou dost not 'permit——" there was a pause, a half-moan, a heavy fall, the startled rush of several physicians to the prostrate form, and, after a few heavy breaths and a sigh, the end came, and Charles Berry had shared that victory over death, and had entered that Life Triumphant, which but a few moments before he had been proclaiming with such intensity of eloquence and with such sure and certain hope.

The scene that followed cannot be portrayed, and when the tidings sped it was as though a personal grief had fallen upon the whole community. The suddenness of the event, the pathos of it, as it first seemed, the tragedy of it, added to the shock it brought to all who loved him. But soon the loveliness and glory of such a death for such a man became the dominant feeling in the

mourning hearts. What more fitting end was conceivable for such a preacher of the Eternal Word, for such a lover of humanity, than to die with the proclamation on his lips that it is life that triumphs?

Our surmises are vain as to how long his life might have been prolonged had he taken counsel with prudence and spared himself the ordeal and strain of his labours that day. For months he had been living from moment to moment, well knowing that any one of his almost daily seizures might be as suddenly fatal as was that. He knew that he might have said, as was said by another noted preacher who suffered from attacks such as those from which he suffered, "I always carry my grave beside me." We might wonder at him, we might gently blame him for heeding not the counsels of watchful friends, and for persisting in obeying his own convictions as to the imperative duty of the day; but we could not but admire the courage of the dauntless spirit that faced the risks, and endured the pain, and won for the hour a costly triumph over weakness in the resolve to make the most of life's short day.

Devout men carried him to his burial in the "God's Acre" within sight of the town he loved and served so well. Never has so influential and so widely representative an assembly met in Wolverhampton as gathered in Queen Street

Chapel on that day. All distinctions of creed and party were lost sight of in the desire to do honour to a citizen and a leader of whom all were proud, and to a man beloved of all. His sorrowing people, his personal friends to whom he had been as a brother, his comrades in many an arduous enterprise, those who had been his strenuous opponents in many a campaign that seemed almost trivial when recalled on that day, gathered about his grave. The tribute and the prayer that not many months before he had himself uttered concerning his friend, Henry Ward Beecher, would have been felt by every heart to be worthy of himself—

“By so much as he made the world brighter, God’s thought clearer, man’s duty simpler, life’s suffering easier to be borne, in that measure he was a fresh incarnation of the Eternal Love. And we glorify God in him, and we pray that the succession, the true apostolic and saintly succession of God’s great and gifted ones may never cease until this weary world has passed through all the phases of its travail and its discipline, and is merged in the shadowless light and the ineffable love of God.”

CHAPTER XVI.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

THE more personal note in this chapter will be understood and forgiven as I try to portray some of the many sides of Berry's manhood, as seen during the intimacies of an association for over eight years in which I was his pastoral assistant at Wolverhampton.

Before Berry had been called to America he had been promised additional pastoral assistance at Queen Street, not only with the view of securing the more effective oversight of the parent church, but also to set him free for the larger denominational work which even then was making many demands on his time and strength. When the call to Plymouth Church came to be considered, this promise was reaffirmed as one of the inducements to him to remain in England. Immediately on his decision being made known, the church took steps to carry out its promise, and in the following month Berry wrote to me on the matter. "They seek a man who will work loyally with me, doing all the visiting, managing the various societies and institutions, occasionally preaching at the branches, and taking the pulpit during my holidays and at such other times

as might be necessary." In urging my favourable consideration of the suggestion he said: "The position is one which will combine great scope for usefulness with the promise of happy surroundings, and, although it might seem to involve a technical inferiority in comparison with an absolute pastorate, will in point of fact confer a higher office and more extended usefulness than many ordinary pastorates can give."

It may be of interest to recall that twelve months later Berry said at the annual meeting of his church: "In our pastoral relations we are seeking to help in the solution of a problem in relation to the Congregational ministry and have ventured upon an experiment that has been often tried and as often failed. Should we succeed, and our experience so far gives every promise of success, I hope we may have formed a precedent that will be as successfully followed in other churches. In establishing a dual ministry for our church it seems to have been generally assumed that of the two ministers one must be an old man and the other a young one. We have, however, thought differently. The man chosen to work with me is a man of my own age, one who has worked side by side with me in a college course, and between whom and myself there exists the sympathy and brotherly regard born of mutual knowledge and trust, and Mr. Drummond and myself have worked together in cordial harmony and with happy results."

When I accepted the position at Queen Street many regarded the experiment as a precarious one. A Liverpool journal ventured to remind me that when two men rode the same horse one had to ride behind. Another influential paper at a later date roundly asserted that co-pastorates had always failed, just as polygamy had failed; and one friend expressed the fear that while at Ormskirk I had been *buried*, at Wolverhampton I should be *Berried*.

None of these doleful predictions were realised. We were naturally thrown together in closest and most delicate relations, but in all the years we knew each other not one unfriendly word was spoken between us. Differences of view and judgment were inevitable, but no estrangement or misunderstanding arose between us, and we worked in the happiest of fellowship. Berry was never less of a hero because I saw him in undress. He was unspoilt because he was unspoilable by success. He was always accessible, sympathetic, considerate, brotherly. During thirty years of closest intimacy I never found him otherwise. Those who heard him in debate, forcible, emphatic, trenchant, vehement, might have fancied from this that he would be dogmatic, overbearing, severe, unsympathetic toward those with whom he was thrown into closest association. This was, however, emphatically not the case. He formed his own judgment and expressed that judgment in terse and forcible phrases

when this was demanded by some critical situation. But he was one of the gentlest and tenderest of men. Even in his busiest days he made himself too accessible. He was always giving the best of himself away, and was at the beck and call of everyone who was in straits and perplexity. I have opened and dealt with his correspondence for months together, and know something of the claims upon him from far and wide. There were not only requests for service, backed by all kinds of pleas, some weighty and touching, some specious; lengthy epistles from cranks and crotcheteers the world over, but letters from men to whom his words had been of help or to whom they had given the promise of help in some time of tragic necessity. These were all dealt with either personally or under his direction, and rarely was a request refused if even at considerable inconvenience it could be granted.

In the autumn of 1893 the miners of Cannock Chase, a colliery district not far from Wolverhampton, were locked out through their refusal to accede to a proposed reduction of wages. Berry threw himself with all his might into the struggle on their behalf, being convinced that they had right on their side. He acted as almoner for some of the public funds raised to assist them through the crisis—notably the fund raised by the *Daily Chronicle*—and also assisted in the distribution of garments. I went in, morning after morning, for weeks together

and found him making up parcels of clothing with his own hands, and keeping every account in his own prompt and accurate way, spending a long forenoon at this work, and then in the afternoon rushing off to some distant and onerous engagement, or visiting the districts where the distress was most acute and meeting the various committees, and all the while maintaining his full pulpit work at his own high level. Few men could have done what he did in those long weeks; he did it without a trace of pity for or wonder at himself, and without ceasing to be his own unworried and cheery self.

Many of his people did not take his view of that industrial strife, and, indeed, they suffered severely in their business through the protracted lock-out. It is a fine testimony to both pastor and people that the people made no endeavour to restrain their pastor in his efforts on behalf of the miners, even though some of them thought the men ought to have yielded, while Berry maintained his ground with a fine tact and temper that never betrayed him into a resentful attitude towards those who differed from him.

Nor were the miners ungrateful or forgetful of his tireless efforts on their behalf. No flower laid on his grave was more fitting and touching than the loving tribute of the Cannock Chase miners sent through Mr. Albert Stanley, their agent, to Mrs. Berry the day after her husband's death.

" . . . As miners we can never forget the help he rendered us in our great struggle in 1893 ; hundreds of our people would have starved had it not been for the money, clothing, and food that he sent us during those seventeen terrible weeks. We valued even more highly the help he rendered us with his clear, eloquent speech. As Christians we mourn the loss of one of the brightest sons of the Church. His lofty style, profound sympathy, and deep insight were truly marvellous ; he has given to his generation such a cheery view of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man as has elevated and widened our vision of duty.

" He had a tender heart for the struggles, temptations, and sorrows of the people ; and all the great wealth of his intellect and wonderful witchery of words were again and again employed against the inequality and cruelty of our present economic and industrial system.

" He did not flatter the people, he knew their weaknesses and faults but too well ; but his sternest admonition was always tempered with the spirit of Christian sympathy and love that won for him their warmest admiration and regard.

" Whilst yours is the deepest and acutest sorrow, our loss is also irreparable. The working-people have lost a true friend, and the Church of Christ one of her truest sons and brightest adornments ; but the words he uttered and the pious Christian

example he set us will ever be a source of inspiration and encouragement.

"Again mingling our tears of sympathy with yours,

"I am, on behalf of the miners,

"Yours truly,

"ALBERT STANLEY."

Berry's manhood was many-sided, and was a rare combination of grace and strength. One hardly knew which was the richer. He had all a man's finest strengths—strength of intellect, strength of will, great powers of endurance, courage of a very fine type. Into whatever company he came he brought a dominating personality. And yet all who knew him with anything like intimacy confessed him one of the most winsome and charming of men.

He had a combination of aptitudes such as is not often found in one man. If you took a single quality or group of qualities you would find men to equal, or excel him. But few men have so many diverse faculties and graces combined in a single personality. He was a clear, striking, and philosophic thinker, and yet a captivating public speaker. He was a preacher of truest unction and spirituality, and he was as a political orator well-informed, racy, incisive, witty. He was a man of fine devotional spirit, whose prayers were full of mystic aspiration and vision and fervour; he was a shrewd and alert man of affairs. He could carry himself with manly

dignity and self-possession through the ordeal of a great occasion ; he could enter with boyish glee into the romps of children, the pastimes of young people, and throw himself with cheery zest into the delights of the social circle. You could hardly say that he was always willing to unbend, for he never stiffened himself into the great person who stood aloof from those about him.

In the business meetings of his church he always showed great administrative capacity. He was one of the most sagacious and ready men of business one has ever met. A large church, with many branches, made many demands upon his tact and aptitude for dealing with men. He never committed a *faux pas*, and rarely wounded the sensitiveness or self-respect of those with whom he had a passing conflict of opinion. He had a wonderful grip and mastery over all the intricate details that arose, and would take up his pen and draft the most critical resolution without a moment's hesitancy and without the correction of a word. He had the faculty of disarming opposition and of inspiring and sustaining enthusiasm in regard to any enterprise he initiated, and it is only just to say that never had a man a more loyal, willing, and responsive people around him. When he was absent from them, or ill, he was never harassed by discord, by slackening of energy, by lack of appreciation and devotion on the part of the members of his church. He won

a great love from the people of many lands; he was most loved by those among whom he lived, for whom he laboured, and in the midst of whom it was God's will that he should die and find burial.

His character developed steadily through all the years of manhood. In college he showed all the traits that characterised him in later years, though necessarily in a cruder form. He was always a man who made friends and kept them. He was to his fellow-students what he was to those about him in his prime—bright, cheery, responsive to affection, and eager to give pleasure. He was ambitious, bent on achieving a career, but it must be a career of usefulness to humanity. He never shirked labour of any kind. Unfortunately for him and for us he had no hobbies, and gave himself few relaxations. He had many capacities, but had no capacity for rest. He could not let his mind vegetate. His moments were all intense. He had not learnt what Fénelon calls the great art of allowing others to help him. You found him the morning after an exhausting day stirring early, wide awake, showing no trace of *ennui*, and busy as ever. Solitude was irksome, and holidays, though spent in spots full of entrancing delights, must find him with friends around him with whom he could interchange thought. He spent life in living. He would never have said with Schopenhauer, "Life is a difficult question; I have decided to spend mine in thinking about it." The

years afforded him little "shelter to grow ripe." His character was one that had to mature in open spaces and leisureless years. He was always growing into a richer and more finely tempered manhood, and he never grew so rapidly or so surely as he did in his latest years. All who were with him then marked in him a chastened mellowness—a gentleness that was the harvest of incessant toil and frequent and poignant suffering. He had always seemed so strong and self-sufficient, not to say self-assertive, to those who saw only the surfaces of his manhood, that you might think him above the need of sympathy and cheer from others. But no man set such store on sympathy and brotherly kindness, no man was more appreciative of tokens of regard, no man was more easily hurt by ingratitude or thoughtless neglect. With all the masterfulness that came from conscious power he was in his deepest heart both modest and humble.

He did not make his intimate friends only those who would echo his own opinions. Many of those with whom he associated most closely differed from him in Imperial politics, and on many of the questions on which he felt most strongly. Thus in what should have been restful bye-hours, he was engaged in keen and eager discussion.

The ministers' "Fraternal" met monthly for breakfast at the house of some one of the members. It says much for Berry's brotherliness that he was

rarely absent. He was, as a matter of course, the life and soul of these gatherings. He was never the great man condescending to meet his inferiors, and keeping them severely at arm's length. He was our chief, and his supremacy was never questioned by us, and never claimed by him. He was never overbearing and arrogant. The members confessed their indebtedness to him for breezy talks that overcame the lassitude of the ministerial Monday morning. If a brother were in distress or perplexity, Berry would cheerfully go to endless trouble on his behalf. He always either initiated or fell in with any plans for increasing the helpfulness and delight of ministerial fellowship. The members of that little band are now mostly scattered ; but the brightest memories of every man who belonged to it are the memories of Berry's cheery, genial comradeship in the old Wolverhampton days.

The mornings in his study were occasions when the vivacity and versatility of the man came out at every turn. The happy asides, the characteristically vigorous invective, the bright epigram, the summing up of the ecclesiastical or political situation, the reminiscence of some notability he had just met, the latest story from the clubs or from the lobby of the House, told as only Berry could tell a story then the settling down to conversation that was the "heart-affluence of discursive talk." Had a Boswell been among Berry's intimates it would have

been found that many of the finest and deepest things he ever said were said to one or two men in his study, and spoken not oracularly, but in the simplicities and frankness of serious talk.

When he came into one's house he seemed to bring a sunshine and an atmosphere that were all his own. The children's faces lit up with expectancy, for they were sure of more than notice—they were sure that Dr. Berry would be ready for a scramble and a frolic, and generally a mimic fight that would fill the house with laughter of which his would be the loudest.

Mrs. Rossiter W. Raymond, of Brooklyn, U.S.A., whose guest Berry was on more than one occasion, has kindly permitted me to publish some extracts from a letter to Mrs. Berry that reveal the impressions he made in a congenial American home during his last visit.

"Never was there a life fuller to the brim (so it seemed to us of this loving household); never a patienter sufferer, making light of distress; never an easier person to have as inmate in one's daily life; surely never one who illumined the common processes of the household—the meals, the snug little chats before bedtime, the playing with a child in the nursery—more delightfully than Dr. Berry. In these ways, and in many greater ways (although these were the dearer), he reminded us all so much of our beloved Mr. Beecher, who always

managed to cast a heavenly brightness upon every-day and very earthly incidents. So that when one paused to count up the overflowing gifts which such a temperament bestows upon all who come in contact with it, one said with surprise, 'And besides all this, he is an epoch maker, a man of powerful intellect, a nature of superb spirituality!' One said to me once, after Mr. Beecher's death, 'If he had never preached or been heard of much in the affairs of men, just knowing of him in his family and in his friendship, I should still think him one of the best and most remarkable men that ever lived.' This I can echo fervently in regard to your husband.

"It was my fortune to be able to leave my daughter (who was then a terrible invalid) and return home for a week during the time Mr. Berry sojourned at our house. The steamer had arrived and Dr. Berry had been escorted to our house several hours before I reached home. As it was nearly dinner time when I came into the house I did not go upstairs, especially as the maid said she expected Dr. Berry to return to the house (which he had left to go on an errand) immediately. As my husband and son returned we awaited Dr. Berry downstairs, and presently, dinner being announced, sent upstairs to inquire. What was our astonishment to find him seated on the floor of the nursery in front of a ponderous musical-box, meekly and

obediently changing the tunes and winding them up in deference to the autocratic demands of my little four-year-old grandson! We found that an hour or so previously he had come home, and having been waylaid on the stairs and requested to 'please change the tunes,' he had so instantly acquiesced that the little Prince thought him too agreeable a subject to release, and had kept this Samson grinding corn for over an hour—a very willing slave, however, he confessed. It was Dr. Berry who dubbed the child 'the little man,' and this title has remained since.

"One more incident of many between the great man and the little one it may gratify you if I recall. While my son was sorrowfully escorting Dr. Berry over to the steamer, and while talking the last words, Dr. Berry suddenly exclaimed, with eager eyes, 'I have forgotten something I greatly wished to do. Oh, how stupid of me! How very disappointed I am!' On inquiry my son found that it had been in Dr. Berry's heart to give 'the little man' a parting gift. In vain my son argued that the child never expected gifts, that he was contented to have earned Dr. Berry's love and to have secured his attention. Your husband declared that he wanted to be satisfied himself, and that he longed to have the child remember him by something to be looked at. Suddenly he shouted to the driver to stop, exclaiming, 'There's the very thing!' jumped from the carriage almost before it stopped and

rushed into a shop where silver watches about the size of a small saucer were displayed in the window, purchased one and flew out again in triumph, saying, 'There, I know how a boy feels; the bigger the watch the bigger he is! It will wind up and will really tell the time.' All this at the risk of missing his steamer, for the sake of giving joy to a child and in the hope of being remembered. That both these wishes are fulfilled I need scarcely say. Never was a prouder little man, for whom a pocket had to be made on purpose."

I recall something else that showed the man he was. For many years a lady sent to his vestry a choice button-hole of flowers for each service on Sunday. A pale invalid girl, brought to the church in a bath chair, sat in a pew at the foot of the pulpit stairs. Whenever she was present Dr. Berry never failed to give her his flower as he passed out, gave it quietly and with a winning smile. However exhausted or excited he might be with the service that had just closed, Annie's flower was never forgotten. He had the rare art of doing kind things in the best way.

To see him at his best was to see him in his own home with his children about him. He was never so engrossed as to be forgetful of their little pleasures and interests. He entered into their hobbies, was always ready for a romp, always their comrade, now teasing, now tender, always watchful

for their highest good and seeking to interest them in the highest things. He spared no pains in their careful training. Save for the solicitude that his sickness brought, never was there a happier circle than gathered around that hearth before the shadow fell.

I never knew a man of such indomitable courage and inflexible will. In all these later years he was suffering intermittently from the heart affection that was undermining his strength. When over-wrought he had frequent attacks of feverish prostration, when a rapid pulse and high temperature indicated a serious and even perilous condition. He has many a time gone into Queen Street pulpit or on the platform at some crowded public meeting while in this state, in spite of the warnings of his physicians and the entreaties of those about him; he declined all help in his work, turning all appeals aside with a cheery laugh, and by sheer force of will and with more than his usual energy of voice and gesture has fulfilled the engagement and has returned home in a state of collapse. To those who heard him it seemed incredible when they were told how seriously ill he had been before and after. But all this told its inevitable tale and hastened the end.

This persistency was not mere obstinacy or bravado. The words he penned in a letter to one of his deacons on the Sabbath evening before his death, cast a sacred and interpreting light back-

ward into many an anxious hour that his determination to do his work at all hazards had cost his friends. Do not his strenuousness and eagerness, his insatiable hunger for work and intensity in that work become pathetic and sublime when interpreted by this utterance:

"I would rather preach and suffer than be silent and strong. Our day is short enough, and I begin to grudge every moment that is not spent in the cause of the Kingdom."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PREACHER.

FROM his early days in college Berry realised that his supreme vocation in life was to be a preacher. Everything else must be made subordinate to that. He had, in college, many moods of depression, wherein he regarded himself as destined to mediocrity, if not failure. Many a time, coming from hearing some able preacher, he said, "I wish I could think that I shall ever be able to preach as well as that." He was fortunate, however, in gauging himself early. After one or two false starts he was led to adopt the style of preaching most congenial to his temperament, and in which his powers could find fullest play. About midway through his college course he read a discourse in the sermon class from the text, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," etc. (Titus ii. 11, 12). By this sermon he first impressed his fellow-students, and the congregations to whom it was afterwards preached, as a man who was destined to achieve signal distinction and usefulness. It was clear, terse, vigorous, and eminently practical. From this point his sermons in the main followed this early type. He grew rapidly and surely in his know-

ledge of men, in his insight into truth, and in mastery over himself and his audience, but he retained many of the characteristics he revealed in college.

In June, 1896, in an address to the students of Western College, Plymouth, Berry spoke on the marks of the true preacher. Three things are essential—a mastery of the truth to be preached, an understanding of the men to whom the truth is to be spoken, and a mastery of the art of speech itself. Theology, psychology, rhetoric—these are the three things needful. In dealing with Berry's own characteristics as a preacher it may be convenient to follow the lines here indicated, and to test his qualities by the three essentials he here lays down.

Theology was always Berry's most engrossing study. "My enthusiasms lie supremely in the regions of theology and preaching," he once said. From earliest manhood his keenest intellectual interest was centred in his endeavours to master its problems. In later years the distractions that beset him as a man of affairs and a leader in ecclesiastical movements interfered with the serious and continuous study of theology. And yet, in a surprising way, he kept himself thoroughly conversant with the progress of theological thought. He made time for the thoughtful study of the most important books dealing with Biblical criticism

and Apologetics. For months he carried out a course of wide reading on the doctrine of the Kenosis. Among the papers he left behind is a lengthy and careful digest of Anselm's "Cur Deus Homo?" drawn up in some period of his busy ministry, and, as its thoroughness testifies, representing very sedulous and prolonged work. In discussing abstruse theological and critical problems he could hold his own in a way which proved that this was not mere conversational adroitness, but that he had qualified himself to give judgment by wide reading. Speaking once to me in terms of high appreciation of a great provincial preacher, he said, "And yet I ask myself sometimes, has he contributed a single great truth to the faith of the Church?" Berry had it in his heart, one is sure, himself to add something to the treasuries of the Christian faith. He had many qualifications for gaining distinction as a theologian. Perhaps he could never have profited by a life of studious seclusion, for he had not the temperament of a recluse. He devoted himself mainly to the solution of ecclesiastical problems rather than those of dogmatic theology. He made his choice deliberately, as he saw a work possible to him that was possible to few men. But he many times spoke half regretfully of the congenial tasks he had forsaken in selecting distracting forms of public service rather than the sedulous and secluded cultivation

of his gifts as a preacher, having what he felt was a needed message to the men of his generation.

Berry's preaching to his own people was largely theological. But it was theological without being academic. He was never a doctrinaire, dealing with abstractions which were remote from human experience and interest. The theology he preached was not merely living truth, but truth that made life. Whatever theme he might be handling, he had the faculty of instinctively grasping the practical, ethical teaching of it, driving it home to the conscience and showing its application to the daily life of his hearers. He preached an ethical Christianity, a week-day religion. But he was not a mere moralist, and he had a distrust of preachments about duty and conduct that paid no regard to the spiritual forces which alone could create them. Duty, to him, was dependent upon vision and faith and love, upon the power of the Invisible being brought to bear upon daily life.

One of Berry's deacons, Mr. Henry A. May, has given me his impressions of his pastor's preaching as judged from the standpoint of one of his regular hearers:—

"I have heard Dr. Berry preach on most Sundays during his pastorate at Queen Street, extending over fifteen years. He very rarely preached what, in old fashioned parlance, would be called a theological sermon, that is purely doctrinal. I

have heard him pooh-pooh the idea of doing so, declaring that style of sermon to be largely out of date, and not suitable to the requirements and taste of the times.

"His preaching was, in my judgment, chiefly ethical and religious—devotional, with a dash in it of theology. The religious problems he dealt with were chiefly those of the man in the street, rarely those of books or the religious magazines. He could gauge the thoughts and difficulties of the everyday man with marvellous precision. He had a great gift in being able to carry up into the pulpit the religious thoughts and perplexities of the man in the street, and stating them so lucidly and graphically that, like the Jackdaw of Rheims, regardless of grammar, he cried, 'That's me.' And then the solution to his difficulties, which he had been vaguely feeling after, would be so clearly, convincingly and eloquently stated that he proudly added 'the very thing I have been groping for and trying to express.' It was in this great quality that the chief effectiveness of Dr. Berry's preaching lay, and it was this power also which drew so many men—tradesmen and skilled artisans—to his Sunday evening services, and made the congregations so inspiring to gaze upon, and his ministry so satisfying to such numbers. He was pre-eminently a man's preacher, with all a man's robustness and force. I have heard men on the

steps of the chapel, as they were leaving the evening service, say, 'Ah, he talks like a man, not like a parson. If all preachers talked as he does, I should oftener go to church.'"

A Broad Evangelical Berry always called himself, and it would not be easy to say on which of the two words he laid the greater stress. Through the associations into which he was thrown in later life, he was led to assert and emphasise his evangelicalism, as expressed in the truths he held in common with the leaders of other churches. But he was never the man to suppress his own distinctive convictions. He never sought to capture cheap admiration at the cost of the most transparent honesty of speech. His people respected his frankness of utterance. They knew he was speaking without mental reservations. He faced boldly in his preaching all the difficulties that were perplexing his hearers. Every preacher, he held, should "consume his own smoke," and should take into the pulpit, not his doubts and tentative surmises, but his own certainties. In relation to the theory of evolution and to the more reverent and constructive results of modern criticism, he affirmed confidently that where they affected at all the essential verities of the gospel they only affected them to the extent of making them more credible and effective to the men of the day.

In an interview in 1890 he is reported as saying:—

"Our men stand fast in the old evangelicalism. The suspicion as to a leaning to Unitarianism that is sometimes cast upon them is wholly gratuitous. Indeed, there is a strong tendency against it, on purely intellectual grounds. The suspicion arises from the over-eager welcome which Unitarians give to every broad assertion of our men. Of course, we utterly repudiate the older traditions of orthodoxy, such as particular theories of inspiration and the Atonement. It is difficult to give a definition of our orthodoxy. We should claim all men who stood by the historic veracity of the Gospels, including the supernatural element."

In another interview, reported in the *British Weekly* in 1896, he said:—

"While it is too early to say how far the results of the higher criticism have affected our congregations, I can discern a real difference in their attitude. I believe that, apart from literary and technical criticism, the school of higher criticism has voiced the general sentiments of our average intelligent laymen, and has relieved them from the sense they once had of disloyalty to the Bible. It has given our people a more rational and satisfying belief in the great truths of Scripture."

In the *Echo* for May 16th, 1889, there appeared a sketch, written by Mr. Howard Evans, in which the writer said, in regard to Berry's theological position as he estimated it by his preaching:—

"As a preacher, he is before all things a preacher of Christ. Judging from inference alone, I should say that he was intensely orthodox, though the heresy-mongers would easily find something to sniff at. Lately I heard him preach a sermon at his own chapel at Wolverhampton, on Gethsemane, which seemed to be saturated with the old Puritan theology, though it was presented in somewhat new forms. . . . Doubtless Unitarianism has assisted in liberalising Congregational theology; but if Charles Berry is a representative of the younger men in the Congregational ministry, they are quite as far from the central principle of Unitarian teaching as were Owen, Howe, or Baxter."

In a letter to the writer of the article a day or two after its publication, Berry said:—

"Permit me to offer you my hearty thanks for your too kind sketch of me in the *Echo*. It is refreshing to me, after many and somewhat bitter charges of heresy, to be denominated intensely orthodox. But you are quite right, if by orthodoxy is meant an entire adhesion to the historical basis of our Christian faith. I call every man orthodox whose God is more than a stream of tendency, and whose Christ is more palpable than 'an idea of the Divine.' I am quite indifferent—in the sense of first-rate interest—as to what may be his particular theory of inspiration, atonement, future rewards and punishments, etc., if only he

abides by the veracity of the Christ historic and the living supremacy of the Christ eternal. But I must stop, or I shall be exacting from you the penalty of hearing a theological lecture in reward for having been good to me in your article."

Berry always laid stress on the importance to the preacher of the study of psychology. He said in the address at Plymouth already referred to:—

"In the course of a close and captivating study of the great Puritan preachers, I have discovered that their knowledge of the human brain and heart, their knowledge of the variations of being, and of the ways to bring truth to bear directly upon their thought and judgment, was one of the most marvellous characteristics of our ancestors, and indicated in no small sense the secret of their great power. I have also discovered what I regard as a grave defect in the modern pulpit, and that is the defect in the power of applying sermons. In the matter of constructive, intellectual power, the modern pulpit will bear comparison with the pulpit of any age, but in the power of applying the truth which has been so laboriously constructed I think the modern pulpit is hopelessly weak, and that weakness arises from a lack of adequate psychological study. I do not refer merely to psychology in its scientific forms of study, but to the study of psychology as it is presented in all the great literary masterpieces,

where character is analysed and motives tracked to their utmost simplicity. You must try to know men. Any cheap division of men is false, but the infinite variety in the make-up of human character is a life-study."

The impression that Berry made on the minds of his hearers was that of a man uttering truths of which he was himself sure, to men whom he knew through and through. He was acquainted with the conditions of their daily work, understood the anxieties of their business, and himself moved in the world in which their days were spent. He never gave them the impression of being in the clouds. He was constantly startling his hearers by his insight into character and into the intricacies and mystery of human motive.

He once said something to the effect that when Christ sought to gain knowledge of what was in man He did not study the philosophy of human nature in some rabbi's class-room in Jerusalem or among the books of His day, but learnt, and verified what He learnt, on the street. This was almost an *apologia* for his own way of life. He gained in society with his fellows what he could never have gained in solitary study. The life he led in his busiest years would have distracted, stunted, impoverished, and unspiritualised most men. But Berry had the rare faculty of mastering on the street what he could never have mastered in seclusion.

Henry Simon once said to me, in discussing Berry's powers, that no man can be a great preacher who is not something of a recluse. Berry was a notable exception to this rule. He found that, with his gifts and temperament, he was able to do his own work in a way of his own. It is easy for critics to suggest that he would have done a greater work had he made himself more of a studious hermit. Berry had genius as a preacher, and claimed the liberty to work, not according to conventional standards, but according to his own conceptions of how he could best do his own work.

Berry's preaching was admirably suited to the district in which most of his ministerial life was spent. He said once:—

“This vast and populous district supremely needs spiritual truth—spiritually proclaimed by men whose spirituality makes it evident and impressive by the very brightness and fragrance of its own existence. There is a terrible tendency in the Midlands to submerge the whole of life into a materialistic slough of despond. I do not speak disrespectfully of the Midland capital, nor of the Midland towns, but the character of the industry in these places is not of the kind to raise men while at their labour to thoughts and visions of the Unseen and Eternal. It is a very material labour that is conducted in the Midlands, and the conditions under which that labour is performed tend still further to the materiali-

sation of the labourer. These districts most need the services of a spiritual church, the services of men finely touched with the sympathy and helpfulness of Jesus Christ."

Perhaps the most marked characteristic of Berry's preaching was its manliness. He threw into it all the fine qualities of a strong and winsome manhood. He received countless striking testimonies as to the arrestive power of his preaching. Among his papers there is one packet labelled with his own hand "Letters from those I have helped." They are of a very sacred and confidential character, and they have this characteristic—they are nearly all from men. Scores of men walked eight or ten miles to hear Berry every Sunday night when he was preaching at home. One man travelled regularly from a town sixteen miles away, came in late, and had to leave for his train before the close of the sermon. Another man heard Berry preach his first sermon in Wolverhampton. From that day his place in the church was seldom empty, morning or evening. He walked ten miles, in all weathers, every Sunday. He was a publican, holding a seven days' licence, and one day he came to his pastor and made himself known, and said: "Mr. Berry, I hear you preach every Sunday morning and then I go home and my house is open for the sale of drink from half-past twelve to half-past two. Your preaching has convinced me that this is not right.

What must I do?" "Give it up," said Berry. He did so, and for seven years his house was never open on a Sunday. At the end of that time he came again to Berry and told him that he had scruples about continuing in his business at all. "Then come out of it," said Berry, and, although the house had been occupied by his father and himself for forty-five years, he rose to the sacrifice, and gave it up under the influence of the preaching of the man he had learnt to love and trust.

Berry often spoke of a kindred incident. One Sunday afternoon he was seriously unwell and manifestly quite unfit to preach in the evening. His medical man rather prided himself on being able by somewhat cynical modes of speech to hide boundless goodness of heart and devoutness of spirit. He joined Berry's church some years later, after making a beautiful confession of faith, and it was at his interment, after giving an eloquent testimony to his personal worth, that Berry himself passed away. He was indignant at what he regarded as Berry's foolhardiness in persisting in his resolve to preach, and said, "Berry, you are killing yourself. You are not fit to preach. And what difference will it make whether you preach or not? What good are you doing by all your preaching?" Berry felt, however, that he *must* preach that night, but his friend's words stung to the quick the already depressed and tremulous man. He struggled up to the church,

and was hardly able to lift one foot above the other as he climbed the pulpit stairs. He mastered his weakness, however, by an almost superhuman effort of will, and preached with even more than his usual vigour, *abandon*, and passion. He returned home dispirited and utterly broken down.

Next morning as he opened his letters at breakfast, he glanced at one, started from his chair, and bareheaded and in his slippers rushed across the lawn to the doctor's house, and threw the letter at him. "There's your answer!" he cried. "You nearly killed me yesterday, and there's your answer."

The letter recounted a pitiful story told by a desperate man. Misfortune had followed misfortune, and he had determined to make his way to the canal and commit suicide. "I felt I must come to Queen Street Chapel before I went down to New-bridge. I had never heard you preach, but I felt I must hear you to-night. How did you know that I was there, and that I was going to put an end to myself? I went home instead, and I am writing to tell you that the sermon you preached to me to-night saved my life and saved my soul. May God bless you."

Berry, in his counsel to preachers, urged them to study rhetoric, "the mastery of speech, with a view to the simplest, most lucid, and most musical

conveyance of thought from one mind to another. The people of England have passed into a healthy love of the quiet style of expression; those grand sentences which used to roll out from some of our worthy ancestors would to-day simply drive away congregations in utter despair. The quieter, the simpler the style the better. We want our congregations to forget the preacher and be absorbed in the message. But there are some preachers who seem to make Jesus little better than a great board on which they can advertise their own genius. It is sometimes said that preachers are born, not made; but the more true it is that if a man has the gift of preaching born in him, the more obligatory on him it is that by discipline and long and anxious patience he shall bring out that gift into the fulness of power."

In the article in *The Young Man*, to which reference has already been made, Berry says, in regard to his own aims and methods in preaching:—

"My effort is to discover what message I am to speak, to think it out with care and clearness, and then to write or speak as nearly as possible in the language of my thoughts. In this matter I have practised, long before John Morley gave advice on the subject, a quiet and natural expression. It is, at any rate, my best instrument for effective work. Other men possess other aptitudes. I would not dare to set myself up as a model, or to claim for

my way of doing my work that it is best for all men. All I have to say is that if I am to do any work for Christ I feel I can only do it by making my speech as clear, as simple, as musical as a natural use of language permits. A friend of mine once told me he intended to write an essay on 'The Sermon as a Fine Art.' I do not doubt many men could be most effective when most artistic. But I could not. I have a message to deliver, an urgent call to make, a many-sided and all-interpreting Gospel to expound—and I can be truest to it and to myself when most free from art, when most spontaneous and natural. Some of my generous friends have credited me with a power of clear exposition and practical appeal. If I possess this power in any degree, it is owing to a rigid self-restraint and a diligent discipline in the remorseless excision of mere fine speech. I recall, as I write these reminiscences, a circumstance which often deeply impresses me with a sense of God's unconscious preparation of me for my life-work. I am told that in speaking I manage to send every syllable of a word to the farthest corner of a building, and even moderately deaf people have thanked me for reaching them with my message. But when I was a lad I suffered from a slight impediment in my speech—nothing very marked, but quite enough to affect clearness in utterance. I was so troubled at my slight affliction that for hours

at a time, and for weeks in succession, I used to pace the wide sea-shore and to shout to the waves with a cork placed between the teeth. In time I became perfect master of the muscles of the throat and of the vocal chords, and have ever since worked these muscles energetically when speaking, with the result that I can speak easily in most buildings and be heard by most people. Am I not right in believing that the God who answered my mother's prayer was girding and fitting me for my work, even though I did not recognise Him?"

Berry owed much to the natural gifts which he had also diligently cultivated. His clear, musical, resonant voice filled with ease the largest building and never had to be strained in the effort to be heard. He was thus able to keep it well within its natural compass, and his easy conversational tones as well as his most vigorous declamation were perfectly heard in the most remote corner. His gestures were always easy, graceful, and apparently unstudied, which added to the dramatic effects he produced, while his flashing eyes, keen but kind, seemed to rivet those of his audience.

He thought clearly, and this made his sentences clean-cut and telling. When he began a sentence he knew exactly what truth he meant that sentence to convey, what effect he meant it to produce. Even on the occasions when he was having what he called his "bad times," the vehemence and fire and

magnetism of his oratory made you forget that the underlying thought was, in freshness and force, somewhat below his usual high standard.

In his early ministry Berry wrote his sermons in full, and used his manuscript in the pulpit. As he gained the mastery over himself, and profited by the vigorous discipline of earlier years, he seldom wrote his discourse out at length. In later years he wrote, maybe, a third or half his sermon, and preached the rest from brief notes. The excellence of his extempore utterance may be judged by the fact that the most critical hearer would not be able to detect the point at which he ceased to read, word by word, from the written page.

After Berry had once preached at Carr's Lane Chapel, Dr. Dale, who had been one of his hearers, remarked to him that although barely half the sermon had been written he had failed to note that the preacher from a certain point had ceased to read and was speaking extempore. There had not been the slightest deterioration in literary finish or in sequence and exactitude of thought.

I have before me, as I write, the memorial sermon preached by Berry on the Sunday after Dr. Dale's death, one of the most impressive and weighty sermons he ever preached. There are two manuscripts — one, comprising eight pages, is in Berry's own handwriting, and written without a

single correction of so much as a letter. This was almost invariably the case with all the papers that left Berry's hands. The second is a transcript of a stenographer's report from the point where Berry left his written discourse. The comparison is interesting. The latter half of the sermon was preached without the aid of a single note, and is a careful and judicial estimate of Dr. Dale's work. The unwritten sentences are just as carefully elaborated, with the same balanced rhythm of phrase, the same delicate choice of words, the same sequence of thought, as are those that were read from his own manuscript. The precision of the former is just as marked as the freedom and spontaneity of the latter. Were the whole sermon to be printed, no reader would be able to detect the point of transition from the written to the unwritten parts of the discourse.

Dr. Dale, in reviewing Berry's volume "Vision and Duty" in the *British Weekly*, said of his friend's pulpit style, as shown in his printed discourses:—

"Mr. Berry does not write, but speaks. How he prepares his sermons I do not know; some of the sermons in this volume may have been fully written before they were preached; some of them may have been written afterwards; but in reading them I have had almost from first to last a sense of extemporaneousness. There is remarkable

buoyancy. The stream never stagnates; and as it flows there is a constant ripple on it, and there are flashing reflections of the sunlight. There is the kind of movement that comes from the immediate contact of the mind of the speaker with the mind of his audience. Here and there, as I think, it drops into a familiarity which is not quite in harmony with its general character. There are occasional lapses of another kind, but even these contribute to the impression that the speaker's mind is so fully absorbed by his subject that he disregards a fastidious accuracy."

Some of Berry's best sermons, powerful, logical, eloquent, most compact in thought, most perfect even as pieces of composition, most thrilling in their immediate effects, were preached from a single page of notes written within the hour before the service. The accuracy of this statement will be doubted, but the very sermons could be recalled, and the most critical of his hearers would then endorse the bold assertion. In many cases the theme had been chosen during the week, had been talked over with friends the sermon had grown upon him, so that it would be inaccurate to say that the only preparation had been that devoted to the mere penning of an outline. Sometimes a text has struck him during the service, and he has abandoned the sermon he intended to preach and has preached one of which not a single word had been previously written. Some

of his discourses that were afterwards published were first preached to his own people in this impromptu fashion. On many occasions, when a prolonged and important business meeting has preceded the week-night lecture, he has asked me to go up from the vestry and conduct the devotional service. He entered the room during the hymn before the address, and as I left the platform he asked me what chapter I had read; and glancing over it while the hymn was being sung, himself, as was his wont, singing heartily all the while, he has selected his text from the portion of Scripture read, and has given an address that his hearers would have judged was the result of hours of careful preparation. Some of his most helpful words were spoken under these circumstances. Few men have had the same faculty for "thinking on their feet." You knew that what he was saying was entirely unpremeditated, and yet all the while the stream of perfect oratory flowed on just as freely as though the utterance were *memoriter* and the speaker bestowing all his care on making his rhetoric effective. He never thought obscurely, and hence his sentences were never vague or loose and slovenly in construction. The truth he was uttering was already clear, vivid, and luminous in his own soul.

To his ministerial friends he was always ready to talk sermons, to discuss texts on which they had been preaching, or themes that had occurred to him.

If he had "struck oil," as he phrased it, gained insight into any obscure or difficult or neglected passage, he would talk it over, so as to look at it in many lights and from many standpoints. He was receptive and responsive in regard to suggestions from other minds. A single phrase, casually dropped by a friend or flashing out from the page of the book he was reading, became to him so pregnant and luminous that some of his most massive and original sermons sprang from some sentence that had so gripped him. He had the alchemy that could turn the floating dust of thought in the atmosphere into the gold of speech. Sometimes other men gave him the fuel, but he supplied the fire. He was never the conscious imitator of another man. He was very sensitive as a young preacher to the mental atmosphere created by his reading at the time. A writer in the *St. James's Gazette* proclaimed a discovery and achieved a criticism in regard to Berry, at the time of the Plymouth call, in a sentence that deserves recording for its almost supernatural genius and insight: "His language is indeed suggestive of Talmage, whom he probably reads." Berry was mightily amused at this. At one period of his early ministry he came much under the influence of Thomas Carlyle, and, quite unconsciously to himself, his written style at this epoch bore unmistakable traces of that influence. But in his later years he called no man master, and his style was spontaneous

and natural. It was never, perhaps, characterised by literary finish and taste, for, as he confessed, he was too intent on the substance of his message to seek for excellence of literary workmanship. His methods of preparation for ordinary occasions gave him little opportunity of devoting scrupulous care to giving his sermons rhetorical grace. When he could make adequate preparation, however, his style admirably expressed his thought in its robustness, lucidity, terseness, and precision. His sermons might seem lacking in quiet tenderness of utterance, and yet they touched the very deepest founts of feeling.

In a singularly able and discriminating sketch of him that appeared in the *Liverpool Daily Post* the writer (I believe Sir Edward Russell) says:—“Mr. Berry never seems to aim at pathos, which in a preacher of his make is an advantage; but he wins many and frequent tears, partly by touches intrinsically pathetic, partly by creating in his hearers a somewhat highly-wrought condition, in which the eyes are apt to brim on small occasion. This is a very fine test of efficient heart-reaching oratory. It is the more conclusive in Mr. Berry's case, because his method is altogether manly and practical. He was a Southport boy, and he preached lately at the anniversary of the Sunday schools which he used to attend. Those who are familiar with Nonconformist services and missionary meetings will know the ‘I am that boy’ style of flabby

discourse that might be expected. With great judgment and gentlemanliness Mr. Berry made no mention of the personal circumstances till after the sermon, and then with perfect good taste. He paid the Southport congregation the compliment of delivering before them such a sermon as would have been quite appropriate if it had been preached at St. Margaret's before the House of Commons—where, perhaps before Westminster is a jubilee older, eminent men of all denominations may hold forth before the Legislature.

“Altogether, considering how worthily he aims and how almost invariably he hits, the popular Wolverhampton minister is a great illustration of what may be done by vigour under the control of judgment and good taste. Lord Palmerston valued cramming not for what it taught, but because it tested whether a young man could achieve anything that he had set his mind on doing. Mr. Berry is a young man who would entirely have satisfied Lord Palmerston.

“Moreover, he has a little—or more than a little—of the special gift which has been claimed as the secret of American superiority. Matthew Arnold lately told us that Colonel Higginson, a prominent critic at Boston, put it thus: ‘Nature said some years since, “Thus far the English is my best race, but we have had Englishmen enough; put in one drop more of nervous fluid and make the American.”’

Mr. Berry is an Englishman, but he has got that 'one drop more.' Perhaps Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, recognised it in him."

Berry was never afraid of giving play to his fine gift of humour even in his preaching. He had too high a sense of the dignity of his calling and of his own serious purpose ever to act the buffoon, or perpetrate ill-timed and unseemly witticisms so as to tickle the ears of the thoughtless. But he felt that the pulpit often lost its hold upon men because preachers were afraid of being natural and of expressing their full humanity therein, and looked as though, in his own phrase, "They ate nothing but ashes, and drank vinegar from morning to night." He often said that many a minister failed in preaching, in the leadership of a church, and in the management of men through his lack of the saving gift of humour. Berry was not afraid of using a pithy colloquialism, or a simile drawn from very homely sources. For instance, speaking once on the necessity of expecting great things from our churches, he said: "A good deacon of mine, who, among other things, is a large farmer, tells me that the shortest way of spoiling the best cow in his dairy is not to milk her. Ten or twelve years ago we were distributing soup to the distressed and the foodless, and we had offered out of our straitened resources to give a pint of soup to each person who would bring a basin or jug to

carry it away, and one little fellow brought—I am not well up in culinary terminology, but I think I would call it a bucket, which would hold on the smallest computation ten or a dozen gallons, I mean quarts; and when the distributor had put the pint in he had to look for it, and was so ashamed of putting a pint of soup in a receptacle of that size that he threw in two or three pints, in order to make a show, and as that lad walked away I said to myself, ‘You have given me the best lesson I have had in managing the finances of my church. I mean to show them that I expect such great things that the church will be ashamed to do little things.’”

His illustrations were invariably apt and stirring, with this characteristic, that they were taken from every-day life rather than from literature. A Lancashire cotton mill or Staffordshire blast-furnace would yield him rich stores of parables, in the use of which he would never commit a blunder that even an expert could detect. One of these illustrations will be remembered by those who heard his May address as chairman of the Congregational Union. “The quietest room in a Lancashire cotton mill is the engine-room. It is significantly called ‘the power-room’ of the mill. But from that quietest room emerges all the force which speeds the busy looms in their process of production. Let the engine be neglected, let countless looms be added

without proportional increase of power, and the mill breaks down. We have been neglecting our quietest room, our power-room; we have been adding to the strain without multiplying the force, and the effects are seen in weariness, joylessness, and ineffectiveness. Brethren, we must not work less, but we must pray more. We cannot minimise our activities; but we must sustain them with those more adequate supplies of grace that come in answer to common prayer."

Berry seldom ventured on a literary quotation and his verbal memory was not accurate. Yet if a book had impressed him favourably or unfavourably in his week's reading he was not sparing in either approval or censure. He uttered many vigorous denunciations against the Hedonism of some modern fiction, and the meretriciousness of some modern art. He was always well up to date in his preaching. Current events, the death of a leader in any realm of life, found the Queen Street pastor with a message enforcing some Christian significances and lessons.

No estimate of Berry as a preacher would be adequate that made no mention of the reverence, spiritual insight, breadth of human sympathy, and intense devotional power that characterised his conduct of public worship. His prayers were helpful and uplifting, and revealed the tenderness of feeling, the ripening Christian experience, and the intense

spirituality of the preacher. Those offered on special occasions—in times of bereavement, or of family solicitude, by a sick-bed, at a marriage—did more to reveal the true man even than did his sermons. With all his restless activities he was a man of prayer, living in very close fellowship with the Unseen. We quote part of a prayer offered in a church in Australia when he was very broken in health, and it is lacking in some of the buoyancy of spirit that usually characterised his public devotions.

“Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we come as children to supplicate Thy blessing. Without Thee the world would have no beauty and life no meaning; with Thee how full of beauty and promise and blessedness is life. We have to acknowledge our sins, our downwardness of look, our over-anxiety. Forgive us if we have yielded to the outbursts of passion; forgive us if we have turned aside into the dark prison-house of selfish desire; forgive us if we have turned aside from the opportunity of self-sacrifice; forgive us if we have turned our gifts into wrong channels, and made them a curse instead of a blessing; forgive us if we have yielded unto evil habit until evil habit has become the chain of deepest slavery; forgive us if we have spoiled Thy gifts by staining things lovely and abusing things useful. Help us to seek a better way, give us strength to use all Thy gifts so as to be lifted our-

selves nearer to Thee. We thank Thee that Thy gifts are without repentance, that they come to us in spite of our ill-desert; not even the flood-gates of our past sins can avail to shut out the currents of Thy mercy. We are here to hear the glad tidings again, to think of Thee, so as to be lifted up in our whole being, to meditate on Thee so as to get at the majesty and meaning of living, so as to get at our personal relations with Thee and Thine to us. Oh, Spirit of Christ, take possession of us, and bring us into that simplicity and submissiveness of self which shall lead us into liberty. Look down upon all classes and conditions of men; read our hearts, and, as a father is pitiful, be pitiful; and if we have not risen to the desire to be changed, pity us still more, until we throw open the door and let Him in who brings life and liberty. . . ."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN OUT-OF-CHURCH MINISTRY.

ON the first Sunday morning after Berry's return from his voyage round the world he preached on the text, Philippians i. 12, "The things which have happened to me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel." He gave to his sermon the title "An Out-of-Church Ministry." God's schedule of apostolic service, he said, was always larger than the Church's programme of ministerial duty. The Master had work for him outside the reach of set discourse and sacred building, nor had He sent him forth without preparation for such unofficial service. "I bless God that while for close on twenty years He has found me a place in the ministry of His Church, and has given me many precious seals to my service, He has also, during the whole of that time, thrown me into association with the everyday men and interests of the world, and forced me to see my faith in the light of week-day life, and trained me to find the solution of every human problem in the light of my faith. Yea, I praise the grace that has created in me a passionate interest in everything human and a boundless con-

fidence in the Divine possibilities which throb in every life. My consolation to you for my absence is this—there was both scope and audience for everything God enabled me to give. I could not preach in the technical sense. But as man and friend God gave me entrance to a host of hearts, and within the sacred lines of human interest and affection I could and did speak boldly for my Lord. What followed? It would not be becoming to repeat any of the personal and frank responses made to me. I will only say that from men of almost every class and calling I received the encouragement that God seemed nearer to them and more real; that religion was more reasonable and human than they had been accustomed to think; and that the spiritual fellowship of a church appeared, after all, to possess both sense and beauty. As for myself, I have learned that the preacher must be less of an official, nothing of a priest, every inch of him a man. God helping me, I am resolved to live a simpler life, to talk a simpler language, to enter with greater fervour into the life of men for Christ's sake."

This "out-of-church" ministry which Berry had sought to accomplish "in five long ocean voyages, in long journeys across continents, in far-away up-country settlements, among the mixed life of inns and hostelries," was a ministry he was always seeking to fulfil. The words quoted are self-revealing

as to one of the secrets of Berry's finest influence. You cannot measure his ministry by what he achieved in public and on what we may call his official side. It is no exaggeration to say that no minister of this generation has been more influential than he, in his personal and social life. Sometimes one almost wished that he had secluded himself more. But he looked upon this as one of his opportunities, not only of learning from men, but of helping them, and so fulfilling part of the ministry to which he had been ordained. He loved to move freely among men. He was always approachable. He had nothing of the ascetic or the recluse.

Coleridge said to Charles Lamb, "Did you ever hear me preach?" "I never heard you do anything else," was the retort. In a very real sense this was true of Berry. Many have said that he was the most brilliant conversationalist they had ever met, and his table-talk, his travelling chat, his intercourse with his friends at the club, in the smoke-room, at the fireside, was preaching, and preaching at its best. To a little knot of two or three men he has many a time preached some of his finest sermons. You heard him keep the table in a roar with a capital story told in his own inimitable way, or with some brilliant bit of repartee, and then in a little while the laughter was hushed, the "voices took a higher range"; Berry was launched on some religious theme; men of the world were

listening as they had thought they could not be made to listen to strenuous religious discussion. They opened their minds, set forth their difficulties almost involuntarily, and for hours together Berry would deal with them with a tact, a patience, a frankness, an intellectual honesty, that removed many a prejudice and difficulty and created impressions that were never effaced.

He has told me of talks he has had with strangers in travelling who perhaps did not guess that he was a minister, and who maybe opened their minds more freely to him on that account. He never indulged in vapid pietism. He never dragged religion into conversation, but somehow it generally got in. There was a winsomeness, a breadth of view, a very real tenderness of sympathy blending with a vigour of expression that won him an entrance to hearts that were not easy to reach. He was dealing with difficulties, with unwilling scepticism, with mistaken views of Christianity, and receiving strangest confidences. He had many a frank religious talk with some of the leading men of the day, and was cheered by countless testimonies as to the good he had done in this ministry in life's byways, when, like his Master, he was dealing with individual men.

An intimate personal friend of Berry's, Mr. F. Holderness Gale, has supplied the following reminiscences of the man he loved. They reveal

traits that one ventures to think help us to realise something of the secret of Berry's personal charm and personal influence.

"I met Dr. Berry in the first place at the National Liberal Club, soon after the call to Plymouth Church had been refused, and most of my intercourse with him was there. What struck me particularly about him when I first met him was his manliness, and to the last this was the trait by which he was best described. One day I had been spending an hour or two with him, and we were leaving the Club together, he to go, I think, to Woodford. Our ways parted at the Club door, and when we reached it, he called to me to wait a minute while he claimed his bag. In those days, a member entering the Club might leave his bag with the hall porter, and this Berry had done. He described his bag as a square black one, with a round handle, and was handed one which was beautifully smooth and shone with unsullied varnish. 'That's not mine,' said Berry, 'mine is over there,' and he pointed to another bag of the same shape, or rather which *had* been of the same shape in its early days. When I saw it, the owner's slippers, and sundry other impedimenta, had destroyed its squareness, and the varnish had given way, here and there, in honourable scars of roughened brown leather. 'I suppose you thought that wasn't respectable enough for a parson,' said Berry, as the attendant gave the bag a dusting. 'Bless you, sir, we never

thinks of you as a parson; we always thinks of you as *a man*,' was the reply. I never saw Berry more touched than at this spontaneous tribute.

"Many of the servants of the Club, knowing that Dr. Berry had been a friend of mine, spoke of him to me at the time of his death, and it was touching to see the impression which he had made on them. 'We shan't see his like again,' was the remark of one of the men, as he pointed out the telegram which had just announced Berry's death.

"Coming out of Grafton Square Church one night, when Berry had been preaching, I overheard a stranger make a remark which I have never forgotten. He had evidently been taken specially to hear Berry by one of our friend's many London admirers. 'Well,' put in the latter, 'is not that a man?' 'Yes,' was the reply, and in evident earnestness and reverence, the unknown speaker added: 'I never heard a preacher who made me think so much of how Jesus Christ spoke to men.'

"One of the last occasions on which Dr. Berry preached in the City Temple was during the heat of the discussion on the Education Bills of the present Government. Berry was staying at the Club, and after the evening service he wandered into the smoke-room, instead of going to bed, as he ought to have done. He was drawn into a hot discussion with two or three well-known Irish Roman Catholic members of the Club, and this was kept up till the

electric light was switched off and the room was cleared, but the fight was only adjourned to one of the bedrooms, where it was continued by candle-light until far into the small hours of the morning. As might be expected of such a controversy, neither side was convinced by the other's arguments. I met one of the Irishmen later in the morning, and he gave me a gleeful account of his 'victory' over Berry. Taking this as only one side of the story, I asked the Doctor what he had been doing. 'Like Samson,' he said, 'I fought the Philistines alone and routed them.' 'Do you think you had better pursue the parallel any further?' I ventured to suggest, and the Doctor laughingly abandoned his simile and gave me his version of the all-night sitting, from which it was at least evident that his Irish friends had not made a convert of him!

"What a way he had with young men! I envy the young men who were associated with him at Wolverhampton. Without in any way making fags of us, he would give us all something to do for him. There was something in the way in which he never forgot a man's Christian name if he had heard it. And he would talk things over with us as if our experience could in any degree be matched with his. One day, when the question of Berry's nomination to the secretaryship of the Congregational Union was agitating the whole denominational world and Press,

I saw him talking with Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, and was for passing them, lest I should seem to intrude, for I knew that Dr. Dale's advice was what Berry needed above all just then. But Berry would not have it so. He called me up, and made me join in the discussion. It was a kindly compliment to the interest which Berry knew that I took in him, and was, I felt, intended as some recompense for efforts which I had made to secure absolute accuracy in paragraphs on the Secretariat question which, among other items of Nonconformist intelligence, I was contributing at the time to the columns of an important newspaper in the Midlands. He gave his confidence ungrudgingly, and, in return, how keen an interest he took in any item of good news about his younger friends. There was nothing of flattering or of 'buttering' in his dealings with us. It was a hearty, manly comradeship, for which many of us will bless his memory as long as we have breath. I remember his cheering a rising young barrister (who is now a Welsh M.P.) who was chafing under the delays to which the Irish Home Rule Bill was subjecting Welsh Disestablishment. 'Never mind. You help this stone out of the way, and your question comes next.'

"It must have been about four years before Dr. Berry's death that I met him casually in town one day at lunch-time. He was complaining of feeling very tired, but he had promised to go to a

recognition meeting at Wimbledon that evening. I tried to persuade him to come home with me to Putney, on his way, dine with us quietly, and have a rest before the meeting at which he was to speak. No; he had promised to be present at the earlier meeting, and he would keep his word; but he asked me to go home by the train which took him down the District line to Wimbledon. On the way he suddenly stopped talking and clutched at his heart in obvious pain. He answered my inquiries as to what was wrong with a tired-looking smile: 'Only that old heart of mine, he said. 'One day it will stop like that, and won't go on again; and you fellows at the Club will hear of it and say, "Poor old Berry!" Give me another match, Frank.' And with that he turned away from any discussion of his ailment. How that incident came back to me when the news of Dr. Berry's end actually came. I heard it in the City from one of the newspaper offices, just as I was going to the Club where he and I had so often met. Within an hour of the receipt of the news a proposal to send a wreath to be laid on his coffin was made, and I do not think I shall be betraying any confidence if I make public the fact that the most active collector for the little fund—which we could have easily made ten times larger if it would have served any purpose—was one of Dr. Berry's Irish Roman Catholic antagonists in the

'all-night sitting' for the discussion of the Education Bill."

It was a matter of deep regret to Berry that in the later years of his life he could do no systematic pastoral work in the way of the visitation of his people. But in individual cases, no pastoral influence could be finer than his, and no care more sedulous.

I am permitted, and indeed requested, to give one instance of this. A man in Berry's congregation, who was an earnest and thoughtful Christian man, as a rule, was subject to occasional lapses through drink, and at these times did the most extraordinary things. He would abstain for one, two, or three years, and then would come an outbreak. All considerations of wife, family, friends, position, and religious associations were flung to the winds. The moment the frenzy was over a fit of remorse would seize him, and he would run away from work and home and town, anywhere so as to put as great a distance as possible between himself and his ordinary surroundings. Berry heard of this at one of these periods, sought him out, saw him several times, and gained a wonderful influence over him. The man seemed to have been thoroughly restored, lived a blameless life for long, and sought in an unostentatious way to help and strengthen others. But he was again strongly tempted, and again fell; fell lower than ever, because

he had risen higher. One night he was missing, and it was accidentally discovered that he had taken the train to London. There were two men in London for whom he had an enthusiastic admiration—Dr. Clifford and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. It occurred to his friends to seek to gain the help of the latter through Dr. Berry. Dr. Berry was presiding that night at an evangelistic mission conducted by Gipsy Smith. The hall was so crowded that there was some delay before the message could reach him. He at once left the chair, rushed to the post office, and sent a telegram to Mr. Hughes, asking him to meet the train. He was in Scotland, but Mrs. Hughes hastened to Euston, only to find that the train had arrived, and the man disappeared. It afterwards transpired that, as soon as the poor fellow arrived in London, he went at once to St. James's Hall, in a more or less drunken condition, and was ejected; was afterwards knocked down and almost run over by a cab, besides nearly getting himself locked up by the police.

Berry, remarking that, with this burden on his mind, he could not return to the meeting he had left, walked with the messenger to the man's house, to comfort his wife and friends. There, his sympathy, his hopefulness, his trust in God's providence over the wanderer, and the prayer with the sorrowing circle, lightened the anxious hearts.

Berry was very unwell at the time—the early

winter of 1896—and his anxiety about the poor man preyed much on his mind. At last, after some delay, a telegram came with good news. The day after the man's return home, he went with his wife and friend to see his pastor, who was too unwell to leave the house. "He knew just what *not* to say as well as just what to say," said my friend to me afterwards, with tears in his eyes. He has been completely restored. His gratitude is beyond all words to the man whose brotherly sympathy, and counsel, and watchful care rescued him in that pitiful and tragic crisis. He asks me to give this tribute to one whom so many only knew as intellectually great, and not as the devoted pastor to whom no trouble was too great, even in days of prostration, if only he could help a brother in distress and danger.

Many a kindred testimony could be given from those of his own people to whom, in some time of their trouble, Berry revealed a side of his nature which the public who admired his vigorous eloquence had not the opportunity of seeing. It was a very Christ-like side of his "out-of-Church ministry."

Of all the memorial services held on the Sunday after his death, none was more impressive than the people's service held in the Drill Hall, and attended by over three thousand persons, chiefly connected with the Adult Bible Classes and the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Societies of

the town. The Mayor of Wolverhampton, Alderman Price Lewis, a close friend and devoted Christian worker, presided, and nothing could be finer or more touching than the testimony given from men of various churches as to the influence of Berry upon the life of the common people and among his fellow-townsmen. Each man in that multitude seemed to have lost a beloved personal friend. He had endeared himself in so many ways to members of every church, and to those who were connected with no church, but who knew and loved him as a good and great-hearted man, who, because he had seen God, longed to be known as one who loved his fellow-men. He had not withdrawn himself into mystic isolation. He had moved freely among the multitude with a hearty greeting and cheery smile for every man he met, whatever his station.

“And weary folk, who passed him in the street,
Saw Christ's love beam from out the wistful eyes,
And had new confidence in God and man.”

How ill such a man can be spared! Such tasks seemed to be awaiting him! He can have no successor. Let us remember his words in the days when he was yet with us:—

“God's thoughts and ways transcend ours. He may see completions where we see only beginnings. There is neither waste nor forgetfulness in God.

We who believe and are not afraid are surrounded with a care that shall keep us till our work is done, and that shall gently take us when our work is complete."

"WITH SUNRISE THE CHILD WILL BE UP AGAIN, NOT WEARIED, AS WHEN WE LAID HIM DOWN, BUT HAPPY AND EAGER FOR THE NEW DAY."

APPRECIATIONS.

THE REV. A. M. FAIRBAIRN, M.A., D.D.

BERRY had left Airedale College just before I became Principal. He was one of the old students who mustered to give me welcome, and he did it with felicity and grace. The first time I heard him preach was under circumstances that would have severely tried most men, but they only seemed to supply him with a favourable opportunity for the exercise of his best gifts. It was at the first ordination of any student from Airedale that I attended. Some senior minister had been selected to expound the idea and principles of the Church, but had failed; and Berry, quite a young man, was put in his place. The discourse he then delivered made upon me a very deep impression; it was lucid, sympathetic, with a vision of the spiritual theory and history of the Church very rare in so young a man. He developed the ideals of the prophet and the priest, and from the prophetic office, as that which was distinctive of the new, as the priest had become of the old economy, he developed the theory that the Church lived by its faith, appealed to the reason, and endeavoured to command the conscience, and to build up a society

where the will of God was known in order that it might be done. It gave exactly the sort of promise in a student that would have gladdened the heart of any teacher and made him feel that here was a man for whom the future had great things in store.

While he remained at Bolton it was mainly on the occasion of annual or special meetings of the college that I had the opportunity of seeing him. Now and then I met him in the company of Mr. Shearer, who had been his tutor and was then my senior colleague. His social qualities at such times appeared—his wonderful quickness, his ability to seize the arguable principle in any question which specially appealed to him, to make it his own, to throw himself into it, and to present it under lights that had not by any means occurred to many. This quality distinguished him through life. It is only a few weeks since a friend from the Antipodes—a Professor in one of our most promising Colonial Universities—described the impression made upon him and some of his colleagues by an impromptu speech, or, as it might be more fitly called, a monologue, which Berry delivered one evening in the library just as the shadows began to draw in. It grew in eloquence, in passion, and in the extraordinary fascination which these two, when finely combined, exercise; and, though it was private and the audience were but two or three, yet in spite of the academic spirit, which is nothing if not

critical, the men confessed later to each other that they never heard any sermon or lecture so persuasive, so penetrating, so spontaneously eloquent, an apologetic for belief by the discovery of the more positive ethical truths of the Christian religion.

When Berry had gone to Wolverhampton and I to Oxford, the work connected with the organisation of Mansfield drew us much together; and as it was just about this time that the invitation came to him from Brooklyn, I well remember when he appeared one wet and tempestuous morning to ask counsel on what were then the perplexities of his way. The invitation touched the noblest side of Berry; it made him conscious of new and vast responsibilities, of opportunities here or in America to which he must rise, of duties that had found him rather than been sought by him. The call to Plymouth pulpit seemed a vocation of God. He stood irresolute—shrank from accepting, shrank from declining—feeling that while he would never have put himself forward for so large a sphere, yet the invitation having come to him, unasked and unexpected, he could not decline it without reasons too imperious to be gainsaid. It fell to me to present the claims of home—the increased obligation to serve the churches here which came from the enlarged sense of power and from the degree, to which he was then for the first time awakened, of the claims which the churches had on his service. The issue is familiar fact. Those

who were responsible for influencing his judgment never had cause to regret the part they then took. I recall in this connection the zeal and wisdom with which our old and statesmanlike friend, Dr. Hannay, counselled him, and the gratitude with which he heard of Berry's determination to remain at home. We travelled together to the service that commemorated the act, and we both felt that the place which Berry had made for himself in the Midlands and in the country at large was one of those things for which the Free Churches would yet have cause to be abundantly grateful.

The public work that fell to Berry from these years onward was perhaps more than he was physically justified in undertaking. But he never grudged labour, and he stepped into a place which the falling shadows were then compelling his neighbour and revered friend, Dr. Dale, to cease in the old measure, and with the old efficiency to fill. I am not prepared to say that the amount of public labour that fell to Berry was altogether for his good. It was the misfortune of his position that denied him privacy, silence, the opportunity of growth that comes from prolonged meditation and study. The public claim may in this respect have been helped by his physical infirmity, but one could only feel that the promise he had given was something which present duty, physical causes, and brevity of life never allowed him to fulfil. What he achieved was much; what he might have

achieved was more. Now that we know all he suffered from, the wonder is that he achieved so much; and we can only admire the singular heroism with which he lived face to face with the constant possibility of instantaneous death, and yet never flinched or failed in the thing he had to do. This indicates what was one of his pre-eminent characteristics—his moral courage. He carried his life in his hand every time he ascended the pulpit, or mounted the platform, or undertook a journey in the public service. He knew that he had ventured forth upon an enterprise from which he might never return, yet he did it without boastfulness, without repining, with no consciousness save that he was doing the duty that fell to him as man and as minister of Christ. He was also distinguished by a signal vividness of imagination. He had great power of putting himself in the place of those he addressed, of feeling with their hearts, seeing with their eyes, and realising their whole condition, and therefore of speaking to them the words they needed. He had, too, a most assimilative mind, sensitive to the finer influences in men, quick to respond to the nobler reasons in things. His extraordinary ability to absorb the potent elements in any atmosphere he breathed is evident from the influence exercised on him by the public movements in which he took part. He gave much to the movement for federating the Free Churches, because he got much from it.

The idea of a homogeneous body, with all its members distinct yet all concordant, appealed to his imagination in a peculiar degree. He came to feel the extraordinary promise that was in it, the variety of functions it could fulfil, and the modes in which it could serve man and glorify God. He saw all the branches of the Church of Christ formed into a unity, while each remained independent and distinct. He saw them live for the furtherance of all the philanthropies, combined for the promotion of every mission of grace and truth at home and abroad; he conceived them as so blended as to become the great factor of order, the great source of progress, ameliorating the condition of the poor, enforcing the duties of the rich, built into a splendid social unity, inspired by the feeling of the solidarity of all its members, constituting a fit form for the religious and social activities of Christendom. There was nothing parochial in his mind. All his ambitions were large and all his hopes humane.

He has passed to his rest in what we may not call the maturity of his powers, for these were never reached, but in the fulness of a usefulness that those who remain behind remember with gratitude, while they think of the end with regret. He died as he could have wished to die, but not until he had left a memory that will be an inspiration to many that come after him, while becoming a motive and a hope for those who look before.

THE REV. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A., D.D.

WHEN I first met Charles Berry he was quite a young man, whose name had not travelled beyond Lancashire, and who had his reputation still to make. I had left Lancashire before he commenced his pastorate at Bolton, but my interest in the church at St. George's Road, and my more general interest in our ministers, caused me to observe this bright and promising young man, who had succeeded an old friend in the leadership of a church of whose inner life I had known a good deal. There was quite enough in him at that time to attract me to him. I met him at the house of a friend, and found in him that rare charm which was so marked a feature in him to the end. To some extent we were attracted to each other, though we belonged to different generations, and at that time to different schools in theology. He was of the younger and, as they regarded themselves, the more advanced men; I was not ashamed of walking in the older paths. It might well be, therefore, that he regarded me with an instinctive distrust, for at the time feeling ran high. But, happily, no controversial points were raised to mar the pleasant beginnings of an acquaintance which, in the course of years, ripened into a close and intimate friendship. All I can do here is to record my general estimate of

the man and his work, as derived from the many opportunities of knowing him which I enjoyed during that period. The man who could see as much of him as I have done and not understand him must have been strangely blind, for never was there one more open and unreserved. It was, I believe, impossible for him to wear a mask, or to seem what he was not. His countenance reflected even the passing moods of his spirit. He did not attempt concealment, and it may probably be said that had he made the attempt it would have been a failure. A man of this type makes many friends, and makes them easily. He certainly won upon me, and the affection with which I soon came to regard him only strengthened with the lapse of years.

I had not the pleasure of witnessing the remarkable scene in which he first revealed his true self to the Union. It was really the starting-point of his public life, and I have always regretted that I was not present. Suffice it to say here that the Assembly was in a serious difficulty, and that it was extricated by the remarkable presence of mind, the clear vision and sound judgment, the quiet courage, and last but not least, the broad sympathy of Charles Berry. From that hour he was a man of mark in the denomination. The Congregational Union is not always easy to handle; but even when it is most disposed to take the bit between

its teeth, it is seldom ungenerous, and also, for the most part, disposed to show regard to those who have once shown their capacity to guide its deliberations. My friend never lost the hold which he gained on that memorable morning in Norwich. But it had other consequences than that, in the introduction which it gave him to the American churches generally, and to that at Brooklyn in particular. To me it has been particularly interesting, as being in every respect so true a reflection of the man himself.

At the time he had already been for some years minister of Queen Street, Wolverhampton, the church with which his name afterwards became so closely identified in an honourable association which is not likely to be speedily dissolved. Wolverhampton was a place singularly fitted for the development of the special qualities for which Dr. Berry was distinguished. It was not only that it was capable of appreciating his vigorous and stirring eloquence—what great town is there in the kingdom of which as much could not be said?—but it was also singularly prepared for that broad and masculine conception of the Christian ministry, which to the end the preacher worked out with such remarkable consistency and such signal success. He early became an important factor in the public life of the town, and did not shrink from taking his full share of the responsibility and duties which that position

involved. He was conspicuous both as a political and social leader, ready for any and every service which presented itself, seldom taking counsel with flesh and blood, but obeying the instincts of a liberal and enlightened conscience at whatever cost of personal labour and suffering.

A career like his would hardly have been possible in the last generation. The Congregational minister of that day was almost invariably a Liberal, but he was content for the most part to work in the background. The course of events and the example of a few men—who, believing in their call to this kind of service, and, in fact, regarding it as part of their obligation as preachers of the Gospel, asserted their own liberty to undertake it, and so practically won it for others—have effected a wonderful change. Dr. Berry was one of these, and he found the great Midland town in which he had to labour quite prepared to welcome his work in this special sphere. The last of his great undertakings was the election for South Wolverhampton, where his efforts were in truth simple prodigies. The story is told in the Biography, and is one of the most pathetic incidents of his whole career. He was full of a holy passion for freedom, progress, and truth, and was not at all careful as to the consequences to himself.

There are some, of course, who deprecate this

kind of work in a Christian minister, but they have not felt the touch of that new conception of the religious life which is a characteristic of the present day. It is easy to condemn the political Dissenter, especially if he be a minister, but justice requires at least that the terms be strictly defined before such a verdict be accepted. A man who prostitutes his pulpit and his office for the advance of selfish or party ends, may well come under such censure. But one who labours only for the advancement of great principles, and values the success of any party only in so far as it contributes to this end, occupies a very different position. He is only a servant of truth, a preacher of righteousness, a soldier in the army of progress, a worker in the great cause of humanity. None of these characters is inconsistent with the spirit and work of the Christian ministry. In this country, too, the Nonconformist minister occupies an exceptional position in relation to public life. He is working against a multitude of adverse influences, which owe their origin to the State Church, and that is a political institution. Far be it from me even to hint or, indeed, to say anything which could be construed into a hint that the Anglican Church (as distinct from the Establishment) is not a true church of Christ. It has allowed itself to become so entangled through the alliance with the State, that it is not easy to separate between them. But there is a real difference, though it cannot well be

made manifest while there is a National Church of which every citizen is by law a member. It is against the Establishment alone that the political action of Nonconformists is directed. They have, of course, their differences with the Church itself, but they would never submit these to the arbitrament of Parliament, nor discuss them on political platforms. It is the political status of the Church which concerns them as citizens. Their views as to the Establishment may be right or wrong, but, at least, they are conscientiously held; and, being so, they cannot be silent regarding them. A strange feature in the situation is that, while the clergy of the Establishment are supposed to be not only within their rights, but to be fulfilling their positive duty, when they undertake the defence of the institution, and for its sake throw themselves into the active service of the Tory party, Dissenting ministers who so take the same position on the other side, are branded as "political Dissenters" and condemned accordingly. Those who employ the taunt, forget that so soon as the Church is divested of a political character, this special variety of politician will become as extinct as the dodo.

Dr. Berry held his convictions strongly, expressed them eloquently, worked for them with untiring energy. They were in truth part of his nature, and whether they affected religion, or politics, or social life he could not help expressing them. He was

not only sincere, but he was transparent, and in that transparency lay one great secret of the charm. Of course he sometimes gave offence, but even those who might, for a time, feel aggrieved by some keen expression, were so satisfied of the absence of any unworthy feeling, that they respected the man even while opposed to the cause he advocated. Hence he came to be a great power, first in Wolverhampton, and then in the country at large, in the circles of Liberalism as well as in our Congregational churches.

It is not easy to put in brief, or indeed to put on paper at all, the impression which he made on his friends, and to estimate the qualities to which it was due. Of the depth and breadth of that impression there was a remarkable evidence in the universal demonstration of sympathy and affection called forth by his early death. The tragic and impressive circumstances under which it occurred have doubtless added an element of pathos to this remarkable outburst, but if they have added to the solemnity of the event they do not explain the intensity of the respect and admiration, which have found expression on every side. If my friend had been one of those extremely amiable gentlemen who are so afraid of giving offence to anyone that they never say a strong word or express a definite opinion unless it be one which is pretty sure to find all but unanimous acceptance, this widespread manifestation

of honour would have been more intelligible. But he was the very opposite of all this. He thought clearly, and he spoke strongly. His position on all the great controversies of the day was a well-defined one, and it was always defended with a trenchant vigour which left nothing to be desired. Yet this sturdy Nonconformist, strenuous and uncompromising advocate of Disestablishment as he was, had among the mourners at his funeral a representation of the clergy of the district. A writer in one of the daily papers traced a connection between this and his action at the Grindelwald Conferences, but to me this seems a mere fancy. Rather do I find the explanation of this, and many similar and equally unexpected tributes, in the impression which he produced, wherever he was known, of a thoroughly genuine and catholic-minded man who could oppose principles and systems without attacking their advocates, and would be loyal to his own conscience without impugning the sincerity of those who had reached conclusions of an entirely opposite character. In other words, it was his personal charm—the charm of a strong man whose strength was tempered by a singular geniality, and to whose masculine loyalty was added a sympathetic temper which was almost feminine. This, Dr. Mackennal told the vast crowd at the funeral, was the secret of his power. His brilliant gifts commanded admiration, his passionate earnestness

awakened a corresponding enthusiasm in his hearers, his eloquence swayed the vast multitudes whom he addressed, but it was the man, the personal qualities of the man himself, which secured him such a hold on the affections of numbers.

I have known Dr. Berry intimately, have seen him in all varieties of circumstances, have argued with him or taken friendly counsel together, have discussed all varieties of questions with him, and seen him in all shades of mood and feeling. The result of all my observation was stated in a single sentence to a representative of the *Daily News* within an hour or two after his death: "He was one of the most lovable men I ever knew." That is not by any means intended to suggest that we were always in perfect agreement. We were fellow-workers in many a great enterprise, fellow-soldiers in many a keen conflict; but on matters of expediency, of controversial tactics, of special incidents, or in our judgments of individuals, we often differed. These divergences of opinion, although in some cases they meant differences of principle, did not in the least affect our relations to each other, and certainly did not alter my personal estimate of him. His frankness of spirit, the perfect *abandon* which marked his intercourse, his boundless generosity of feeling, and his thorough heartiness were irresistible. His coming into the house was like a ray of sunshine or a breath of

moorland air—fresh, stimulating, and enlivening. He was—to begin with—a thorough man, without a touch of affectation or a suspicion of cant. If there was one quality which stood out in him more than any other it was (as already indicated) transparency, and next to that I should place his affectionateness of spirit. I learned to know him more thoroughly by a somewhat curious experience. He was out in Australia when a report of my death had been circulated by the newspapers, misled by a similarity of name. Berry was deeply affected, and wrote a letter to his wife, in which he gave his views. She showed this to me, and so revealed a depth of affection which I had never suspected, and which, but for this accidental circumstance, I should probably never have sounded. It was eminently characteristic. He made no parade, but treasured in his heart these strong affections. In this case, at all events, his regard was reciprocated to the fullest extent.

In recording these personal impressions, which are the result of a very intimate acquaintance, it is only right to add that all my knowledge of him was gathered within a few years. It is perhaps remarkable that so close a friendship should have sprung up between men of generations so far removed from each other. But so it was. The attachment was as genuine as the difference of years was undeniable. I had no opportunity of

knowing him either during his college life or the early days of his ministry. During the last few years we have been on the most close and intimate terms. We have been associated together in some important movements, both religious and political. There are few of the public questions of the day which we have not discussed. We have been together in hours of joy and in times of anxiety and sorrow. But in truth I must have been a dull scholar if, as the result, I had not learned to know him very thoroughly. He was not, indeed, a man at all difficult to know. It might be truly said it was impossible for him to appear to be what he was not. He was strongly impulsive, and he was eminently transparent. Those who came into conflict with him might easily be offended, for his opinions were very decided, and he did not shrink from a strong and forcible expression of them. But to men of a nobler spirit this was itself an attraction. They felt that at all events there was no *arrière pensée*, and that even the strongest antagonism of view did not imply any personal bitterness.

To visit his church at Wolverhampton was always a pleasure. He was in some senses a different man there from what we found him in public life elsewhere. That aspect of stern resolution, approaching to combativeness, which very naturally was seen in him on the public platform

or in the committee room, when he was arguing some point of extreme interest, altogether disappeared. He was like the head of a great family, interested in each, friendly and familiar with all. Of the hold which he had obtained on the important church of which he was the pastor, no one who mixed in its circles could have any doubt. His people had a full estimate of his ability and were proud of his achievements. But beyond this there was a personal affection for the man. In many respects the church afforded a remarkable opportunity for the exercise of his special gifts. I doubt whether there is a church in the country with organisations more extensive and complete, so that there was an abundant scope for his administrative skill, which was considerable. His name was closely linked with that of the church, and it will be long before that bond will be broken.

In theological views we were in close sympathy. We might both have been described as Broad Evangelicals. The term is somewhat vague, for "broad" suggests an idea of elasticity. It is not to be supposed, therefore, that we should have agreed upon the exact statement of our doctrinal position, or, indeed, have been disposed to attempt such definition at all. In his college days he had shared, and shared somewhat decidedly, in the revolt against the severe orthodoxy of the former generation

which was so prevalent among the young men of the time. As he once told me, he entered the ministry with a notion that he had new light to shed upon the old problems, which were racking men's brains and troubling men's heads as they had done for centuries. It was no unusual experience. Perhaps we have all of us shared more or less in the notion that the wisdom of the fathers would have to pale its ineffectual light before the superior light of their greater descendants. Rehoboam's youthful advisers have had imitators in every age who have equalled, if they have not surpassed, their prototypes in rashness and self-confidence. Whether they were more numerous or more pronounced in the generation of students to which Berry belonged, it is hard to say; but the period was of unrest and, to some extent, of transition in theological opinion. The crisis, so far as the Congregational churches were concerned, was reached in 1878, but the movements which culminated in the Leicester Conference had long been at work. That they had in them strong elements working for good is not to be denied. The Calvinism of the time, though priding itself on being moderate and regarding some of the favourite ideas of the fathers as misrepresentations of the Gospel, was still harsh and severe. It had not learned the great lesson that "blessing, not cursing, rules above." It was too fond of preaching the "terrors of the Lord," and was disposed to look

askance on the new idea of the Fatherhood, which was so prominent a theme in the teachings of Baldwin Brown and his sympathisers. On the other hand, these teachers of a broader school were all too ready to magnify the difference and to present themselves as discoverers of a new truth. In this current Berry was borne along, and his idea when he entered on his work in Bolton was that he had a wider and a truer Gospel to preach—one which was less theological in its character, which had regard to the practical rather than the metaphysical side of truth which, above all, kept the Father's love so prominent that men should cease to feel that there could be any difficulty in the way of forgiving sin or any need for a sacrifice. Jesus Christ was the incarnation of the love of God, and by looking to Him the heart was to be renewed and the sinner pardoned.

With such views the young pastor began his work. But it was not long before experience taught him the difference between the one as looked at in the calm speculation of the study, and the same theories when applied to the hard facts of daily life. The story of his disillusion has been told and criticised. For the essential correctness of the narrative, as given by my friend Mr. Jowett, I am prepared to vouch. I had it from the lips of Dr. Berry, and more than once talked it over with him. With his consent I have told it—indeed,

I am satisfied that he was desirous it should be known. I well remember the tone of earnestness with which, after telling me of the intense agony which the dying woman endured and the pitiful appeal which she made to him: "Is it possible that there can be mercy for such a sinner as I have been?" he added, "Oh! Rogers, if I could not have told that wretched sinner that Jesus Christ had died for her, and was as willing to save her as to save me, I doubt whether I could have dared to preach again." So, as he said, his fine-spun theories, which looked so fair, were all torn in pieces by the stern logic of facts. They did not work, and for this simple reason, that they had left out of account the effect of sin itself. Argument might explain away logical objections, but it could not still an accusing conscience. The sinner needs the Gospel of forgiveness, and from that day Berry did not fail to preach it.

He was never a severe precisian in theology, and possibly there may have been some who, up to the end, would have doubted his orthodoxy. Happily, in all our churches we are outgrowing this tendency to judge men, and especially to make them offenders for words. For my own part, I have no doubt that he was one of the most powerful preachers of the message of love and peace which the Gospel brings to the world. Some of the views with which of late years he has identified himself I must humbly confess myself unable to understand. He was

accustomed to tell me that I was a Zwinglian, and I was never anxious to rebut the charge. I say this, however, with a qualification: I try to follow the Master's injunction and call no man "Master." I do not profess to believe in Zwingle's infallibility or to accept all his teachings with an implicit faith. But the view of the Lord's Supper, which is supposed to be described by the term "Zwinglian," appears to me that which is most consistent with Scripture. The idea of a commemoration rightly understood seems to fulfil all that is intended by the most tender, impressive, soul-subduing institution of the Christian Church. "While I was musing," says the Psalmist, "the fire burned." In this simple sentence I find the secret of the special character of the Lord's Supper. It brings home to our thoughts the dying Lord, and surely nothing can so fire our hearts to holy love and nerve us for holy service as the musing which that remembrance of Him may induce. What my friend, and some others who think with him, found in the Lord's Supper beyond this I have never been able to understand. Doubtless they understood themselves, but assuredly they failed so to define it as to make it clear to others. One thing must be added: there was not a hint in them of that sacerdotalism which gives an exalted theory of the Sacrament its most dangerous feature.

I am not sure whether the tendency of which I

speak, combined with a cognate disposition to exalt the Church, dates back to his visits to the Grindelwald Conference. It is only just, however, to say that between these two tendencies there was no necessary connection. Possibly the Conference, bringing him into closer contact with men whose ecclesiastical training and opinions were so different from his own, had forced him into a more careful examination of their respective positions, and it may be to a re-casting of certain opinions. He talked of himself as a High Churchman, as I should be prepared also to describe myself. I doubt, however, the wisdom of adopting such a mode of expression, as the term has an accepted meaning, and I fail to see the advantage of our claiming it except as a protest against the shameless injustice of priests who represent us as despisers of the Church because we refuse to recognise the right of any human priest to a place in it. We insist as strongly as they upon the independence of the Church, but in our view the Church is a society of Christians and not a hierarchy or a priesthood. It is different with the word "catholic," which Dr. Berry also claimed for Congregationalists, for we cannot allow any one church to appropriate it without a tacit admission that we ourselves are in a state of schism.

It would be very unjust to argue from any of these peculiarities that Dr. Berry was in the faintest

degree disloyal to the principles of Nonconformity. He was rather fond of declaiming against negative descriptions of our ecclesiastical relation ; but though he would protest against the use of "Protestant" and "Dissenter," it certainly was not because the spirit of the Protestant and Dissenter had weakened in him. Again I feel bound to record my own opposition to this view, but the difference was one of expediency only. There was no abatement of his attachment to the great principles these names connote. It would not have been easy to find one who had less sympathy with the teachings of Rome on the one hand, or who was less disposed to acquiesce in the assumption of a State Church on the other.

His connection with Grindelwald was somewhat peculiar. Just before the conference of 1892, I met him at one of those delightful gatherings we used to have at Corton, where Mr. and Mrs. Colman were the host and hostess. I had undertaken to preach at Grindelwald on one of the Sundays, and also to deliver an address. The conference was then quite in embryo, and I had guarded myself against being committed to a definite approval of the scheme. But even this very qualified sympathy with the movement was too much for my friend, who rallied me a good deal upon the subject. I was not destined, however, to fulfil the engagement. For my visit to Corton was brought to an abrupt

termination by the severest attack of illness I have had in my whole life, which compelled me to cancel every engagement I had for months in advance. I was surprised, when I began to take interest in public affairs again, to find that my lack of service had been so efficiently supplied by my friend. There was nothing novel or astonishing in his generous willingness to fill my place, for that he has done more than once. But it did astonish me to learn how thorough and complete had been his conversion to the principles of the conference. In that faith he remained firm to the end, and the spirit which it awakened in him, doubtless led him to take the conspicuous and useful position which he did in the Free Church Council. His mind was hospitable to new ideas, and his heart was large enough to embrace in sympathy men of opinions the most antagonistic to his own.

The story of his long illness and his early and singularly impressive death produced a very deep impression, not only in religious circles, but in that wider political world in which he was both known and honoured. I had long known that there were some serious symptoms of his physical condition to which, as it seemed to me, he did not attach sufficient importance; but it was not till the meeting of the Free Church Council last year that I became really alarmed. We were both engaged for a meeting at Weston-super-Mare in celebration of

the jubilee of the Rev. H. Batchelor. I went straight down from London, and my friend joined me at Bristol. In reply to my first inquiry about his health he told me, in somewhat grave style, that only that morning he had for the first time suffered from one of his heart attacks while speaking. I at once expressed my astonishment and regret that, in despite of so grave a warning, he should be on his way to another meeting. My own feeling was that his wisest course would have been to spend the day in bed. But this was not his manner of life. He had undertaken a duty, and he meant to perform it. I have sometimes thought that he was encouraged by his recovery from previous attacks, and presumed too far on the strength he supposed himself to possess. At all events, he went to the meeting, spoke with his wonted force and eloquence for more than half an hour, talked cheerily at supper, and landed at Bristol in the small hours of the morning. I was astonished to see him at the Council the next morning full of life, but certainly not surprised when he told me a little time afterwards that he had had another attack while speaking in the evening of the day, and had then gone on to an overflow meeting. Such was he, ever unsparing of himself, and so full of energy and vigour at the time that he forgot—if, indeed, he ever understood—that he already carried a sentence of death within him. It is mournful to think of so promising a

life brought to so early a close. And yet there is something to qualify even this thought. Would the life have been as brilliant or as useful had the man been otherwise? This apparent recklessness of consequences when work had to be done was the result, partly, at least, of the intensity of his nature, and that was one of the secrets of his power. There was in it, too, that unselfishness without which there is no true greatness. His friends may mourn in bitterness of soul his removal from a sphere in which he was fitted to do such eminent service, and from the home and social circle of which he was so charming a member; but looking at the results of the life, it is a question how far they would have been increased had he pursued the path which a cold prudence might seem to indicate. Life is not counted by years only, but by works, and, judged by this test, his was a life eminently worthy of honour, as it was rich in ennobling and elevating influence.

It has been suggested that Dr. Berry himself was not unconscious of the possibility—not to say probability—of an early and sudden close to his career. To me it seems hardly possible it can have been otherwise. The cardiac attacks were so frequent and so severe and, as time rolled on, prolonged in duration, as well as increased in intensity, that he could hardly have shut his eyes to the possibilities of the case. I was with him when he first visited

Dr. Habershon, of whose close and kind attention to the case it is impossible to speak too highly. The outlook was sufficiently dreary. Even then I personally felt that the hope of Dr. Berry's restoration to the work he had been doing was exceedingly slight. But it did seem probable that a prolonged rest would give him the opportunity of doing a moderate amount of service inside his own pastorate. Naturally, and as I think very happily, he took the optimist view. I did not see him for some time afterwards, but when I met him in October I could see a distinct and decided change in his tone. I was a little surprised to hear of his return to work at Wolverhampton, but the bright and cheery tone of his letters encouraged me to hope for the best. I have reason to doubt now whether any confidence of that sort was shared by himself, and this view is confirmed by an extract from a letter to a friend only two days before his death: "I would rather" (he says) "preach and suffer than be silent and strong. Our day is short enough, and I begin to grudge every moment that is not spent in the cause of the Kingdom." He would work because he felt that the night was coming, and we, while we mourn his loss and are simply overwhelmed by the circumstances under which it occurred, cannot but see, even through our tears, the nobility of the devotion by which to the end he was animated. Such a life is at once an example and an inspiration. Dr. Berry

was a many-sided man, versatile in his talents, possessed to a large extent by that concentrated force of purpose and enthusiasm of sentiment which makes the strong man, singularly magnetic in character and influence, and with a heart as tender, as true, as brave, and as Christlike as it has ever been my lot to meet.

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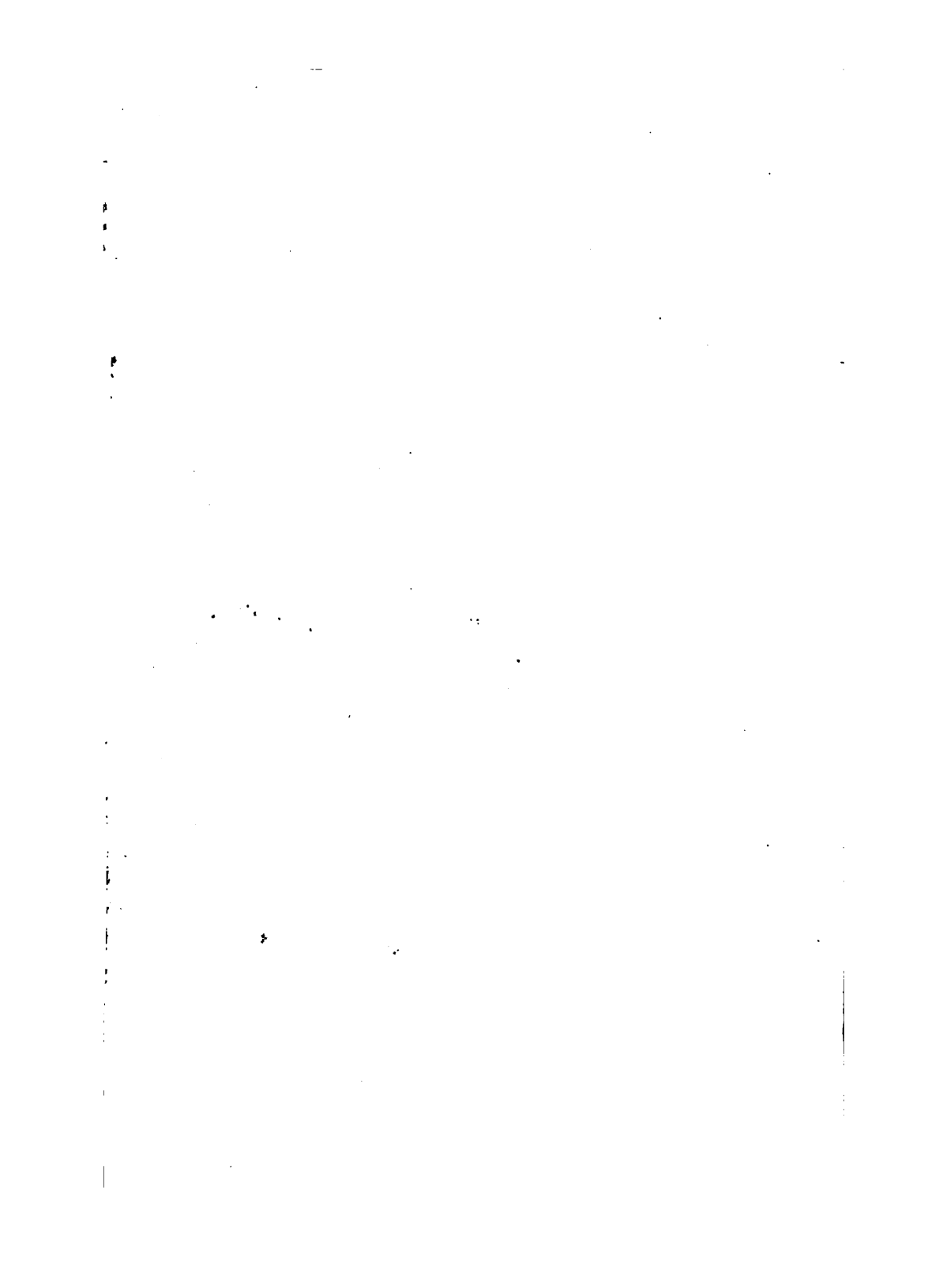
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